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LOCHANDHU

A TALE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

"De nos jours ceux qui aiment la Nature sont accusés detre romanesques"

Chamfort.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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LOCHANDHU.

CHAPTER I.

What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly!

SHAKESPEARE.

AMHERST found the Baronet seated, as usual, in his great leathern-chair, in his old corner by the fire-side, with all the comforts of his dishabille about him, while Lady Sanderson was engaged reading to him from some of the newly published pamphlets of the time, occasionally relieved by Macflea. His reception was much more kind than his own previous reflections had taught him to anticipate. He was the first to express the sense he entertained of his own apparent neglect; but he had so many excellent apologies to offer, grounded on the occupation Lord Eaglesholme had engaged him in, and the

difficulty he had found in deserting the castle, when he had, as it were, been left in charge of it by his father's old friend, that if the excellent couple had harboured any suspicions of lukewarmness on his part, they were immediately and satisfactorily removed.

Cleaver, who had just returned from shooting, entered the apartment as he had ended his explanation. He no sooner observed Amherst, than he stopped short, with the handle of the door still in his gripe, and expressing his surprise at the sight of him, in a whistle such as might have done honour to the pipe of a boatswain, he exclaimed,

"Why, Master Amherst, are you there?—May I never steer another league, if I did not suppose you had run from the good ship Dasher.—Why, what in the name of navigation has become of you all this time? Methinks, that considering the nearness of the harbours we are laid up in, ye might have taken a trip over, to see whether your old shipmate was dead or alive here, seeing that he could not come at you, being, as you were, in what may be called a forbidden port."

Amherst perceiving, that the rough but right-hearted sailor felt somewhat sore at his apparent neglect, went up to him, and taking his passive hand, repeated to him all those apologies he had just given to Sir Alisander and his Lady, taking care to season them with every thing kind in manner and expression. Cleaver, who at first surveyed him with a countenance that exhibited considerable dissatisfaction, and who allowed him to lift his arm as if it had belonged to the body of a dead man, by degrees relaxed the almost ludicrous sternness of his honest weather-beaten features as he spoke, whilst the warm life-blood was gradually brought back into his fingers, by the repeated cordial squeezes they received from his young friend; until, at last, his paw regaining its usual share of nerve, he shook Amherst's hand with an intensity of grasp, betokening the full return of his affection.

"Why, look ye, my boy," said he, "I am not very ready, d'ye see, to suspect you of want of regard for old Cleaver. But you must allow that appearances were confoundedly against you. —To leave me so long in strange seas, without ever thinking it worth your while to throw me

out a single civil signal of inquiry. It is true you knew that I was in a friendly harbour, where, let me tell you, I have not failed to be well dry-docked and victualled, in as princely a manner as one of his Majesty's yachts."

After some general conversation, Cleaver retired to his apartment to rid himself of his shooting-gear, and Amherst accompanied him at his request, to let him into a little of his history since they had parted. He did not think it quite time to make Cleaver his confidant, regarding his attachment to Miss Malcolm, and had, therefore, no intention of informing him of it at present. But when he came to mention her name, he spoke of her almost insensibly, in language so glowing, that the sly sailor, after listening to him for some time, eyed him with one of his arch and significant looks, and, after one of his long whistles, exclaimed,

"Oh ho! my boy! I see how the land lies. Now, after all your palavering apologies, I come at last to the understanding of your neglect of old Cleaver. Why, here is a pretty business!—not contented with running away from the wife your father chose for you, you are going to hook

yourself to one here, whom he knows nothing about."

Amherst was a little vexed that he had thus unwarily exposed his secret. At first he tried to shift the subject; but the rough tar was not to be so easily thrown out; nay, the confusion accompanying all Amherst's attempts had the effect of making Cleaver still more satisfied, that there was something in the suspicions he had hazarded. Reflecting, therefore, that it was perhaps, after all, due to one who had already shown so lively an interest in his happiness, and whose warm regard for him had induced him to take so decided a step in his behalf, to give him his full confidence, he proceeded at once to tell him all that had passed between him and Miss Malcolm; and concluded by saying that, to complete his happiness, he only waited for her uncle's consent, of which he was certain as soon as his Lordship should return to Eaglesholme.

Cleaver, who saw that the match was perfectly fitting in every respect, joined with Amherst in opinion that his father, having had sufficient time to cool on the disappointment in regard to the marriage planned for him with Miss Delassaux, would

certainly be delighted with the prospect of his forming so honourable a connection as that with the niece of his old friend Lord Eaglesholme. Amherst expressed to Cleaver his determination to acquaint his father with his intentions, as soon as he should have it in his power to announce Lord Eaglesholme's approval to him. Meanwhile, he entreated Cleaver to say nothing of the matter to any one; and his friend, with a hearty congratulation on the happy result of their voyage, readily promised to keep his counsel.

Cleaver had little to communicate to Amherst in return for the important and joyful intelligence he had just got from him. He declared it was impossible to describe the kindness he had received from the excellent Baronet and his Lady. The fact was, his society had been perfectly delightful to Sir Alisander, and his exhaustless store of naval anecdotes, and accounts of foreign countries, had made the worthy man's evenings pass with an interest they had rarely possessed. The highest compliment Sir Alisander could have paid Cleaver was that of quitting his bed for his leathern-chair, several hours earlier than he was wont to do before he knew him, whenever he

heard in the morning that the Captain had no intention of going to shoot. The first questions he usually asked his servant, when he came to his apartment, regarded the Captain's motions, that he might regulate his motion or rest accordingly.

As for Lady Sanderson, Cleaver had absolutely won her heart by his admirable disquisitions upon the rearing of poultry and pigs, as well as by the numerous receipts for culinary and other purposes he added to her family memorandum-book. Above all, he had conferred an everlasting obligation by giving her a plan for a new and highly improved poultry-house and piggery, both of which had arisen into being during Amherst's absence, and entirely under Cleaver's direction and superintendence, nay, in some degree by the operation of his own hands;—"These Sawnies," as he said himself, "absolutely understanding nothing of such matters, and having no more hands than the animals for the erection of whose dwellings they were vainly and ignorantly labouring."

He said, that he had indeed spoken of an intended trip to a neighbouring sea-port, but that

neither the Baronet nor Lady Sanderson would for a moment entertain the idea of permitting him to get his anchor a-trip.

Though the evening passed very pleasantly at Sanderson Mains, Amherst felt considerable impatience to be gone. He took his leave, therefore, as early as he well could, and, with many promises to Cleaver that he would inform him more regularly of his future history and plans, he cordially shook hands with him, and set out on his return to the castle.

The night was delightfully calm, but so dark as to make the earlier part of his walk rather slow and tedious. But as he got down near the shores of the lake, the moon rose in all its splendour. Its image trembled on the scarcely agitated bosom of the water, and its beams rested on the mossy stones, and moist patches of sand on its margin. Amherst was thankful for the light it afforded, for he anticipated the difficulty he should experience after diving into the threefold night of the overgrown avenue, running within the grounds from the old gate. And, indeed, when he arrived there, he found the shadows so deep, that his utmost attention was requisite to enable him

to scramble along among the bushes growing in the middle of the way.

He was about to emerge from the thicket upon one of those open glades we had formerly occasion to notice, when he observed two human figures crossing the broad field of moonlight towards the spot where he then was. Amherst had already proved himself to be no coward; but experience having lately taught him that the neighbourhood was infested by lawless ruffians, he deemed it prudent to remain in his present obscurity, until he should gather from circumstances whether he was about to meet with friends or foes. Such was the intensity of the shade, that he had only to step behind the trunk of an aged beech, sheltering a holly-bush beneath its wide-spreading boughs, to insure absolute invisibility, whilst, from the position he occupied, he commanded a full view of the open ground, as well as of the entrance to the avenue, near which he was posted.

He soon discovered that the two figures were men, though they were both wrapped up in cloaks, perfectly concealing their persons. They wore broad-brimmed slouched hats, and, from the moon being behind them, their faces were thrown so

much into shadow, that he was prevented from having a sufficient view of their features, to enable him to guess who they might be. They were engaged in earnest dialogue, and when they came within ear-shot of him, he distinguished that their conversation was interlarded with Italian. This circumstance led him to imagine they were two of Lord Eaglesholme's domestics, and he was on the eve of quitting his concealment, when some words reached him, that made him wish to gather a little more of their conversation, before he ventured to expose himself to their view.

"You know very well," said the taller man to his companion, "that I am not over scrupulous about such matters. Yet I don't much like this job, seeing it may spoil my trade on this coast, and, besides that I have been out o' the way of doing such things, the risk is greater here than where we carried it on formerly. But, damn it, I won't refuse this venture neither—what is my life but risk? —hazard all! and perhaps the deeper and more devilish the game, the more suitable will it be for me. But you are a very fiend incarnate. To you this matter is mere sport."

"Sport!" cried the other with a hellish laugh,

"*Madre di Dio!* this is but child's play to the deeds I have done. But I needn't tell you—*avete veduto voi stesso—non recordatevi?* Have you forgotten how he begged for mercy, and how his eyes started from their sockets like those of a flayed bullock, as I dragged him with the rope? Augh *corpo di San Gennaro!* how the foaming waves flashed in the red glare of Vesuvio, like the flaming billows of hell, when I hurled the carrion carcase into the sea!—*Avete dimenticato*, eh!—ha—ha—ha!"

"Talk not of it now," said the other villain, who seemed to be shocked by the recollections he called up—"It was horrible!—I trust I shall never see such a scene again!"

"Horrible! *padre!* 'twas but doing our work honestly. *Voleste diavolo*, that we had disposed of this little bit of goods at Naples—*ma non importa*, we shall have better price for it here. *Maledetto!*" exclaimed the villain, as he fell, tripped by a bush growing in his way, after they had entered the dark avenue.

"*Cosa c'è?*" demanded the other in a tone of alarm, and at the same time drawing a sabre, as Amherst judged from the sound.

"*Niente!—niente affatto!*—I have tumbled over a cursed bush, that's all.—*Dove siete, amico?—fa bujo come quello dell' grotto della Sibilla!*"

"Here," said the other, "here is my hand."

"*Dove?*"

"This way."

"*Maledetto!*"

"*Guarda! Guarda!*"

And so they went groping, and swearing, and stumbling on through the dark avenue. The sound of their voices, as well as of the crashing of the bushes, reached him at intervals from a distance, long after his ear had ceased to catch the import of their words.

Amherst removed into the open moonlight, from the dark shade where he had concealed himself, still haunted by the murderous expressions he had heard. At one time he had felt an inclination to spring upon the villains, and endeavour to seize them. But a moment's reflection taught him, that such an attempt would not only be rash in itself, but altogether useless if successful. Their conversation, it is true, betrayed the perpetration of some dreadful murder, but it seemed to have been effected in a foreign country. They had also

some deed in contemplation; but whatever it might be, the expressions of the taller ruffian implied that it was of a less black complexion. The features of the men had been perfectly concealed from him by the shade of their large foreign hats. But their voices struck his ear as if they were not altogether strange to him, though he could not remember where he had heard them before. The taller man seemed to be no foreigner; his conversation, however, showed that he was acquainted with the language of Italy, in which his companion, evidently a native of that country, addressed him; and the appeal to his recollection of the shocking transaction at which he had probably assisted, proved that he had been abroad.

He began to consider whether it would not be proper to give information of what he had heard; but as he continued to turn the matter over in his own mind, he came at last to believe, that his imagination had hastily reared an airy phantom, out of some desperate smuggling transaction the ruffians had planned. He now remembered, that the path he was pursuing had been described to him as one very often used by the smugglers, when crossing into the country from a small haven, form-

ed by the river running through the glen. That such characters as are engaged in this illicit trade, in which villains of all nations are generally leagued, might have been guilty of murder at one period or another, he thought extremely likely, and to some such crime, perpetrated in the prosecution of their nefarious traffic, the words which fell from the Italian had probably reference. But there was nothing in what they had said, that could warrant any suspicion of an intention to repeat such an act. Nay, the tall man, in making up his resolution to what was now proposed, seemed to shudder at the recollection of murder. The very expressions, "*risk—venture—hazard—disposal of goods—higher price*," &c. all appeared to bear allusion to some bold smuggling attempt they were deliberating. Having thus reasoned with himself, he finally resolved to say nothing about the matter until the return of Lord Eaglesholme.

As Amherst was approaching the castle, his ear was saluted by the sound of voices, accompanied by peals of laughter, giving him reason to hope for a conversation less appalling than that he had so lately listened to. He soon perceived O'Gollochar approaching, with the gay

Mademoiselle Epingle. Of late his servant's fears of the castle and its goblins seemed to have been very much dissipated, and the merriment, now supported between the smart Frenchwoman and the joyous Irishman, furnished a sufficiently adequate explanation of this remarkable change on the mind of the latter.

They came merrily along, arm in arm, through the checkered moonlight, under the tall groupe of trees, Cornelius chastening his usual triumphant stride, to accommodate it to the figurante trip of *la belle Parisienne*, whilst their *éclats de rire* partially disturbed the black squadrons roosting above.

"Ah! Monsieur Ogolhaire, you moss commence to stody la langue Française, by vat you call larn de vocabulaire of loove; *il faut commencer vos études en apprenant le vocabulaire d'amour.*"

"Och, botheration!" cried O'Gollochar, "how can I understand your French now, when myself can't see your eyes? Cavilaire of a Moor! arrah, what mane ye be that now, my dear? Sure I am no Moorish cavalier; not a bit of the Moor have I about me that I knows on. Faith, may

be after all she manes to say that she would take me, though she found me in the middle of a moor, and without e'er a thing else but my own four quarters. Sure and isn't it very sinsible in her now, poor thing! Troth, my dear, and wouldn't I not take yourself now with never a bit of fortune but your pattens?—Och, master, is that you?" said he, as he now perceived Amherst. "Sure Miss Malcolm has been in such a quandary about your honour's honour, that nothing would sarve her but that mamsell and I should trudge out in sarch of ye."

"*Oui c est vrai*," interrupted the loquacious Frenchwoman, "*à cause de l'absence de Monsieur, Mademoiselle reste actuellement abimè dans la solicitude et dans une suspense effrayante.*"

On hearing this, Amherst stopped to inquire no further, but leaving them to the private enjoyment of their moonlight colloquy, he hastened to relieve Eliza from an anxiety, the existence of which, however, gave him a great deal of pleasure.

The fact was, that day-light no sooner began to disappear, than Eliza called to mind the attack upon her uncle, and the attempt upon her-

self; and reflecting that she had urged him to return that evening, she tormented herself and Madame Bossanville with a thousand apprehensions for his safety, and a thousand self-accusations, for having been the cause of exposing him to the danger she dreaded. At last her anxiety rose to such a pitch, that she had dispatched Epingle with orders to O'Gollochar, to set out immediately to meet his master. The amorous Irishman lost a good deal of time in flirtation with Mademoiselle, who forgot the fears of her mistress in her own amusement, and who, by way of making up for her neglect, and doubtless from pure good nature, offered to accompany Cornelius, to relieve him from the loneliness of his way.

Amherst was well repaid for his late walk, by the happy hour he spent with the ladies before retiring to rest. Forgetful of the presence of Madame Bossanville, he and his Eliza indulged in the tenderest conversation; and the old lady was obliged to give them more than one hint, before she could induce them to part for the night.

CHAPTER II.

And why not death, rather than living torment ?—
To die is to be banished from myself;
And Livia is myself. Banished from her,
Is self from self; a deadly banishment !

SHAKESPEARE.

AMHERST had been in bed for several hours, when he was roused from his slumbers by the loud toll of the castle bell, followed by the tramp of horses in the court-yard. He rose, and went to the window, through which the flashing of torches from below gleamed upon the ceiling. To his surprise he saw Lord Eaglesholme in the act of dismounting, surrounded by his attendants. Amherst felt rejoiced at his arrival, resolving to procure the much-wished-for interview next day; and he composed himself again to sleep, to dream of years of happiness.

Lord Eaglesholme, fatigued with his long and late ride, did not appear at breakfast. In about two hours, however, Amherst was admit-

ted to his apartment. His heart beat high with the joyful certainty of the speedy fulfilment of all his wishes. He found his Lordship seated in the same arm-chair, in the same dress, and nearly in the same attitude in which he had first seen him, on the day of his arrival at the castle. He was not, however, so deeply engaged in his author as he then appeared, but was employed in looking out for the threads of those subjects in which he and his young friend had been occupied, when their studies were interrupted. He rose immediately upon hearing Amherst's step, and embraced him with a kindness and warmth which could scarcely have been greater had the latter been his son.

After expressing his hope that Amherst had felt no *ennui* during his absence, "I have been just endeavouring," said he, "to recall those ideas which had arisen in my mind after our last experiments, and which have been put to flight by my absence on other matters. You remember the phenomena which exhibited themselves in our last experiments, and which both of us remarked had been hitherto unnoticed by others?"

"I do, my Lord, most perfectly," said Amherst, "but I must confess to you, that my heart is so filled at present with considerations deeply affecting my future happiness, that until my mind is put to rest, I cannot possibly find room for any other thoughts. It was my impatience on this subject, that induced me to solicit the present interview."

Lord Eaglesholme assumed the attitude of attention, and was silent, while Amherst proceeded.

"To you, my Lord, who are best acquainted with the incomparable merits of your niece, I am sure it cannot be surprising to learn, that, in the first moment of my introduction to her, the charms of her person made an immediate and deep impression upon me; and the intercourse I have since enjoyed with her has discovered to me a heart and a mind no less lovely and angelic than the form they animate. As my growing admiration of Miss Malcolm has been so strong that I could not conceal it, you must have remarked it, and it is very probable that I am now only making a declaration, which my whole behaviour, when in her presence, must have led you very early to anticipate. Why then should

I thus formally address, in set phrase, you, whose kindness has convinced me, that I already enjoy your friendship and your good opinion, on my own account, as well as on that of my family? My Lord, I love your niece with an attachment exceeding in ardour any thing that language can describe; and I am happy in enjoying the conviction that our passion is mutual, since I have already ventured to ascertain, from her own lips, that I am not indifferent to her. May I then hope that you will sanction our union?—I need say nothing of my family or of my prospects,—you are, I believe, sufficiently acquainted with both, to know that neither of them are despicable.—Be assured I feel how very inestimable the gift is, which I am now bold enough to ask of you; but the consciousness of possessing such a treasure will teach me to deserve it."

Whilst Amherst was speaking, Lord Eaglesholme's pallid countenance, and large, dark, melancholy eyes, were illumined with transient rays of joy, lighting them up at rapidly succeeding intervals, like those brilliant and innocuous flashes, gleaming cheerfully across the Italian landscape, during the balmy summer nights. A

pleasure, more intense than any of which Amherst had ever before perceived symptoms, played over his noble features, and the sanguine lover hailed the happy omen in his heart. Seizing his Lordship's hand, with all that enthusiasm he was so apt to give way to, he energetically exclaimed,—" My Lord! you have ever treated Miss Malcolm as your daughter,—Oh! let me then be your son!"

Amherst had no sooner pronounced these words, than he perceived a very surprising change of expression in Lord Eaglesholme. He started up with a look inexpressibly wild and agitated, and striking the palms of both hands violently on his brow, so as to shade his eyes from observation, and turning rapidly away, he paced the room, exclaiming, in broken and half-muttered words, as if his power of utterance was choked by his feelings,—

" Oh God! in what a dream of bliss was I indulging! I—I who am doomed to know no bliss! —My spirit was treading the flowery paths of Elysium, when hell—blackest hell—was yawning beneath my feet!—No, no, no!—no such earth-

ly happiness for me—and for Heaven !—Oh merciful !——"

Here he sank into the deep arm-chair. He shrouded his features within the ample drapery of his robe. His whole frame was agitated by the violence of his emotion, and he sobbed aloud.

Amherst stood confounded. Even all thoughts of the interesting subject, on which he had so lately been eloquent, were banished by the astonishment that seized him. It was impossible to attribute so sudden a paroxysm to anything but madness, since nothing he had said could have given birth to it. He remained in a state of mute and distressing awe for some time. At length, Lord Eaglesholme's agitation in some degree subsided. He sat in silence for several minutes. Then slowly removing the folds of his robe, he exhibited a countenance, of which affliction had taken complete possession. His eyes were red with weeping, and his cheeks bathed in tears.

"Young man," said he, in a tremulous and subdued voice, and then, as if he had felt that the expression was hardly kind enough, "My dear Amherst, forgive the emotions excited by certain distressing recollections which always overcome

me. You have on more than one occasion seen that I am not always master of myself. But I have now recovered sufficient composure to tell you—it grieves me to the heart to pronounce it—that Eliza Malcolm never can be yours!" These last words, uttered with peculiar emphasis, and in a deep and hollow tone, sank like the knell of death into Amherst's heart.

After a momentary pause, arising from the stupefaction occasioned by so calm, yet so determined a refusal, Amherst threw himself at his Lordship's feet, and grasping his hand,

"Oh, my Lord! my Lord!" he cried, with an emotion not inferior to that of Lord Eaglesholme, "Oh, blast not thus my very hopes of life with one cruel sentence! What can I have done to forfeit that good opinion I, at least at one time, with truth, believed you entertained of me? Tell me, I implore you, what I have done to merit your displeasure, and there is no penance so terrible that I will not undergo, and deem it pleasure, if I can by it but gain your esteem, so as to induce you to unsay the dreadful sentence you have pronounced, to me worse than death!"

He looked anxiously in Lord Eaglesholme's eyes, as if he could have read his very soul.

His Lordship slowly and calmly replied, a faint smile of kindness breaking through the tears still swelling from his eyelids—

"Trust me, my dearest Amherst, the resolution I am compelled to take has no origin in any conduct of yours. Mine towards you has but ill fulfilled the impulses of my heart, if it has not uniformly borne testimony to the affection and the gratitude I have entertained, ever since that eventful night when Heaven sent you as my preserver. No my dear friend, the good opinion I so soon formed of you, and which, as you say yourself, you at first justly claimed by hereditary right, has continued to rise every day we have been together, and now stands high, on the firm basis of the personal knowledge I have enjoyed, of your good sense, of your uncommon attainments, and, above all, of the purity of your principles." Then, after some deep internal workings almost overpowering his words, "And do not I owe you more than even the sacrifice of my life could repay? Do I not owe to you the life of my Eliza? of her whom you have so well called my

daughter, since no father ever loved daughter more?"

His voice sank altogether, as if quite overcome by his feelings. But again recovering himself, he added, "Were there not objections—did there not exist insuperable objections—which I cannot—which I dare not unfold—Heavens! how I would clasp you to my heart as the husband of her affections, and which I still may do as the preserver of her life!" Saying so, he tenderly embraced Amherst as he knelt before him. "How would I cherish," continued he, "the lovely offspring of those who are so dear to me!" A transient gleam crossed his mind, called up by the pleasing picture he had drawn in it. "But," added he, with returning gloom, that increased as he proceeded in a firm, though hollow voice, "an uncontrollable fate forbids me to indulge in such blissful, but seducing visions; and I must repeat, solemnly repeat, that Eliza Malcolm never can be yours!"

Amherst rose from his knees in frantic despair. "Oh, my Lord! my Lord! you know not the agony you are torturing me with. You cannot, you have not the cruelty to persevere in

a refusal that must rob me of my life. But what is my worthless life! You love your niece. You love Miss Malcolm with all the strength of a parent's affection. You have seen our growing mutual attachment—you know her heart. Ah! little do I know it, if to her the doom you seal will not be as certain as that you have passed on me. In mercy!—thus, on my knees, I entreat you, my Lord!—crush not two young hearts, so twined together, that their very life is as one!"

"I see it all," said Lord Eaglesholme calmly, after a pause. "I see it all now—I should have opened my eyes to it then; but, forgetful of circumstances, I was lulled into a fatal apathy, or rather into a pleasing dream, from which I now awake to all this misery. I feel how deeply I have been to blame. But reproach me not, Amherst. Alas! I am sufficiently punished by those recollections to which I have just been roused. Merciful powers!" added he, after pausing and looking up to Heaven, whilst every fibre shuddered as he said it—"Grant that I may not be more severely punished in the hap-

less fate of her, by whom alone this life is rendered tolerable to me !"

Amherst instantly caught a ray of hope from these last words. He clasped his Lordship's knees. "Aye, my Lord !" said he—"her fate ! Think that her life hangs on the same frail thread with mine. Oh, in mercy snap it not ! We have loved, until love is the only food left for us to feed on. Deprive us of it, and we sink from very lack of nutriment. What obstacle but must yield to considerations affecting the life of your niece—your more than daughter !"

Lord Eaglesholme was silent for some minutes. 'Twas like the silence preceding the dread thunderpeal, that sinks the very hearts of the trembling peasants, over whose frail dwellings it is about to speak in awful sounds. He appeared to labour within himself, as if arming his soul with resolution sufficient to enable him to pronounce, what some mysterious, but no less imperious fate required of him, and to terminate a conversation equally torturing to the feelings of both. With a countenance resolute, though not unkind, he slowly and solemnly addressed Amherst—

"Young man," said he, "we are wearing ourselves out, by giving way to these emotions. They are unavailing, and must be suppressed. I am now compelled, for the third and last time, to declare, that circumstances do exist, rendering it absolutely impossible that Eliza Malcolm can ever be the wife of Amherst Oakenwold. Would that I could have stopped here! But sensible as I now am how culpable I have been, in permitting a freedom of intercourse between you, I cannot allow myself to persevere in error, now that my eyes are opened. So very imperious are those circumstances which forbid your union, that though it were to risk the life of her I hold so dear, I should consider myself called upon to offer up even such a sacrifice on the altar of duty. Having said thus much, you cannot be surprised, that after the extreme violence your passion has betrayed, I should add to the prohibition of your union, the still more severe sentence of eternal separation. The laws of hospitality—nay, more, that gratitude towards you, which must ever throb in this breast, whilst it continues to be animated by the pulsations of life—the strong affection I bear you—all, all forbid that I should, in plain

terms, desire you to quit the roof of Eaglesholme. But good feeling, on your part, will prevent you from taking advantage of this, and when I tell you, that whilst you remain here, Eliza Malcolm must be banished from these walls, which have been her shelter from infancy, I say all that can be said by one whose wishes towards you are warm, and who cannot bear that his words should be cold; or that need be said to one, possessing too much purity of sentiment to render plainer language necessary."

With these words, Lord Eaglesholme threw his arms around Amherst's neck, and embraced him three or four times, with a flood of tears, and an agitation that sufficiently spoke his inward torture, and the struggle it cost him to part thus with his young friend; then tearing himself from him in a state bordering upon distraction, he covered his forehead with his hands, and rushed out of the apartment.

Amherst sank down on the floor, felled as it were by the overpowering weight of the feelings which oppressed him, and lay for a time stunned by the unexpected result of an interview, to which both he and Miss Malcolm had looked forward

as about to crown their happiness. His ideas floated through his brain with a confusion defying arrangement. He started up, as if he required to convince himself that he was really awake, so strange, so absolutely impossible did the reality of the last hour appear to him. He seated himself, in despair, in the deep velvet chair Lord Eaglesholme had so lately occupied, and his ears rang again with those fatal words, which condemned him to perpetual banishment from her, without whom life was to him as a blank.

His Lordship's resolution was too fixed to expect that it could be shaken, at least (as lingering hope whispered him) *at present!* "In some weeks—nay, perhaps in some days hence," said he within himself, "when those gloomy and superstitious forebodings of an opposing fate are less in ascendancy over his mind, he may become more accessible to reason; at all events, cruel as it is to banish myself from this roof, which covers all that is now, or ever can be dear to me on earth, to remain under it for a moment longer at this time would not only be inconsistent with propriety, but would be subjecting my frail hopes to certain shipwreck, as well as exposing Miss Malcolm

to additional misery. Would that I could see her before I go!—But to attempt to procure an interview with her, would be a breach of honour, that must inevitably destroy the good opinion he entertains of me, now so much my desire, as well as my interest to preserve. Yet to leave the house without communicating with her, is a thought too dreadful to be entertained.—But would not a secret letter appear in the same light to her uncle as a stolen interview?—I must address his Lordship, and endeavour at least to induce him to make her acquainted with those reasons so imperiously commanding my involuntary retreat, at the very moment when we expected to be united for ever."

A violent agitation, excited by the recollection of what his hopes had been that morning, and how cruelly and incomprehensibly they had since been blasted, put a stop to the current of his ideas for some moments. At length, becoming a little more composed, he took up a pen, and hastily wrote the following letter:—

"To Lord Eaglesholme.

"My Lord,

"My feelings are too deeply wounded to leave me sufficient self-possession to write coherently, or to say what I ought. But I obey your implied request—I leave your house; for, torn as my heart is, I cannot forget the kindness I have received in it, and of that I should be unworthy were I to remain. Did I not carry with me a ray of hope, that something may yet occur, perhaps at no very distant period, to remove those, to me unknown, objections you are disposed to consider insurmountable, my going would be to me as a departure to death itself. Extinguish not, in charity, this feeble spark, which must now be all the comfort I can possess.

"I entreat you, my Lord, as an act of justice, to explain to Miss Malcolm the mystery of my sudden departure. After what has passed between us, this much at least is necessary for my justification. As my sense of honour forbids me seeking to inform her by undue or secret means, I trust that yours will induce you to take care that I do not suffer in her estimation. That we may yet

meet under happier circumstances, and that our union may yet receive your blessing, is now the only solace remaining to the wounded heart of your sincerely attached

"AMHERST OAKENWOLD."

Amherst had sealed and addressed this letter, when he heard steps approaching through the adjoining library. They were those of Robertson. He immediately put it into his hand, with a request, that he would deliver it to Lord Eaglesholme; and, begging of him to send his servant to his apartment, he hastened thither.

When O'Gollochar appeared, Amherst summoned up resolution to tell him to pack up his baggage, and have it transported to Sanderson Mains.

Without waiting for a reply, he hastily wrapped himself up in his cloak so as even to shroud his features from observation, and, arming himself with that artificial courage, which so often carries the victim of tyranny or of justice with a firm step to the scaffold, he walked down stairs, across the two courts, and out by the gate of the castle, in a state of mind that rendered him unconscious of the objects around him.

CHAPTER III.

In the Highlands I have met with some Lairds who surprised me with their good sense and polite behaviour.

Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to his Friend in London.

The good Sir Alisander and his Lady received Amherst with their usual kindness. The distressed state of his mind rendered him unfit to reply with the warmth corresponding to so much cordiality. He blundered out an explanation of his so speedy return to Sanderson Mains, and muttered something about Lord Eaglesholme's engagements, not very intelligible even to himself, but perfectly satisfactory to them. Cleaver was eager for a private conversation with him, though he secretly apprehended something unfortunate, from the melancholy countenance and manner betrayed by Amherst, in spite of all his endeavours to conceal it.

Having found some apology for retiring to his

apartment, Amherst led Cleaver out, and communicated to him the distressing turn his affairs had taken, giving way to the full tide of his affliction.

Cleaver, having heard him, and after recovering from the astonishment his narration threw him into, began, with all the enterprise of a British tar, to recommend an attempt to cut the little vessel out of the enemy's port, and make prize of her. But seeing that Amherst's sense of honour, and respect to the laws of hospitality, forbade him to commit so great an outrage against the feelings of the uncle, even although he should have the niece's consent, he dropped the proposal, and, seeing he had no other plan to offer, said all in his power to console him. But his words fell like drops of rain on the surface of an agitated ocean, and he desisted from a task which he saw was hopeless. He, however, urged him to rouse his self-command so far at least, as to hide his melancholy from observation, to avoid the risk of its being misinterpreted by those who were ignorant of the cause. Amherst exerted all his energy to comply with his advice, and he found it the more necessary to do so, as he understood from Cleaver

that Mr Macgillivray, to whom they owed their introduction to Sir Alisander, had arrived, and that, besides him, there were to be some other guests at dinner.

Amherst therefore hurried to his own chamber to endeavour to compose himself in private. But this he found of little benefit, his thoughts carrying him immediately back to the distressing conversation of the morning. But these agonizing reflections were interrupted by the entrance of O'Gollochar. The Irishman himself did not appear to be in the most cheerful mood; but Amherst had neither time nor inclination to question him as to his afflictions. The dinner-bell rang, and, summoning up all the resolution he was master of to conceal his painful feelings, he hastened down stairs to meet the company.

He had no sooner entered, than he was saluted by the graceful bow of Mr Macgillivray, whom he immediately recognized as one does an old acquaintance. After some cordial expressions had passed between them,

"Mr Oakenwold," said the Highland laird, "your countenance brings to my recollection that of an English sea-captain, who bore the

same name as you do, and by whose humane exertions I was, many years ago, saved from a watery grave at Naples. He was, I think, Captain Oakenwold of the Grampus Man-of-War, then lying in the bay."

"I believe," said Amherst, "I think I remember having heard my father say, that he once commanded a ship of that name."

"The Grampus!" said Cleaver, who was within hearing of what had passed, "Aye, that he did! Surely no one knows better than I do, seeing I was his lieutenant at the time."

"Then, Mr Oakenwold," said Macgillivray, taking Amherst's hand, and pressing it to his bosom, "in you I certainly behold the son of my preserver. The story is short. When I was a young man, I happened to be riding along the rocks in the neighbourhood of Baia, on a stubborn runaway mule. The animal took fright at some accidental noise, and darting off with me along the edge of the precipice, lost his footing, and rolled over the rock into the sea. Stupified with the height of the fall, I was unable to make the effort necessary for swimming, and should infallibly have gone to the bottom, had not a man-

of-war's boat been passing at the very moment, within a few yards of the spot where I fell. In that boat was your father. He dragged me senseless from the waves, just as I was sinking for the last time. From that moment to the present, I have been under the pressure of unacknowledged gratitude. It is now my good fortune to have it in my power to express it to the son of my preserver; and I may say that it still exists as fresh here," putting his hand energetically to his breast, "as the day it was impressed upon me by the kind action."

"Why, faith, now you mention it, Sir," said Cleaver, "I do remember to have heard your father, Amherst, tell the story. If I recollect right, it happened the very day we sailed. He had gone to look at some of the wonders of that coast before leaving it."

"When I first saw you in the Cove of Eaglesholme," said Macgillivray to Amherst, "your name, as well as your strong family resemblance, recalled your father to my recollection. This was the cause of the apparently rude and impertinent manner in which I scanned your face. You may remember I had little opportunity of

satisfying myself with regard to you that night; and business called me home next day, or soon afterwards; but I was resolved, upon this occasion, not to leave the low-country without ascertaining whether you were a relation, if not the son of Captain Oakenwold. This, I must confess, was the chief object of my visit of this day, to my good friend Sir Alisander, and I need not say what satisfaction I have felt in the discovery."

Macgillivray followed up these speeches with a number of kind inquiries about the Admiral. Amherst being seated next to him at dinner, had a great deal of conversation with him. His manners were fashioned after that overstrained school of politeness, giving its character to those of the best bred Scotch people of the day; but travel had given him the power of throwing its formality aside, whenever circumstances required him to do so, and his remarks were lively and entertaining. At first there appeared a certain slyness of expression in his countenance, that might have made one hesitate as to his sincerity, but a very little time only was necessary to wear away

this impression, and to set a stranger perfectly at ease with him.

He told Amherst, that since they had last met, he had been living quietly at home, on his Highland estate, whither he meant to set out on his return the following day. He spoke much of his strong attachment to the retirement and innocent pleasures of a country life, and expatiated in glowing terms on the wild beauties of the Highland country where his residence was situated. Having thus done all in his power to excite Amherst's curiosity,

"If I mistake not, Mr Oakenwold," said he, "you told me, when I had first the good fortune to meet with you, that the object of your voyage to Scotland was chiefly to gratify curiosity. Now, if you mean to do poor Caledonia justice, you must not leave her without visiting some of her grander scenes; for though not an unsightly nymph, she is coy, and must be followed into the innermost recesses of her wildest mountains, before she will condescend to unveil her charms. If you will deign to honour my humble mansion with your presence for a time, and vouchsafe to accept of the meagre hospitality I can afford,

and above all, if you will condescend to accompany me to-morrow, you will confer a lasting obligation on me, to be treasured up with that I already owe your father."

Amherst hesitated to accept so sudden an invitation; but he returned a polite reply to it, expressing, in general terms, his doubts that it would not be in his power to go immediately, but throwing out a hope that he should be able to make out a visit to Mr Macgillivray before leaving the country.

After ruminating, during the course of the evening, upon the issue of his interview with Lord Eaglesholme, he began to think that it would be perhaps as well that he should accept of the civility of the Highland laird; seeing that his present vicinity to the habitation of Miss Malcolm would only keep up a more lively and continued state of irritation in him, without improving his hopes, or brightening the present gloom of his prospects, and reflecting, that the intelligence of his having left that part of the country would rather be soothing to her uncle, on whom he knew that he had no chance of working in any other way than by time, and by ra-

tional and well-placed entreaty, aided perhaps by circumstances over which he had no control. He was firmly persuaded, that any attempt to move him at present would not only be fruitless, but would rather have the effect of fortifying him in the strong determination he appeared to have taken. For these reasons, he finally resolved to accept of Mr Macgillivray's invitation, and after consulting with Cleaver, he took an immediate opportunity of communicating to the Highland laird his compliance with his kind wishes.

Macgillivray received it with much apparent joy.

The arrangements for the journey were soon made. A servant was immediately dispatched to one of Sir Alisander's tenants, to procure two stout horses for Amherst.

O'Gollochar received his master's orders to pack up with manifest dismay. With a doleful visage, and still more doleful voice, he ventured to ask, whether his honour was going to travel? and on being informed as to the fact, he began blubbering.

"What, in the name of wonder, is the meaning of all this, Cornelius?" said his master.

"Och! and does your honour think it nothing,

now, to lave Aiglesholme Castle and all its pretty woods, its nate drawbridge, and iligant towers?"

"I did not indeed expect that you would have expressed regret at leaving a place, where not very long ago I had so much difficulty in persuading you to remain."

"Aye, in troth, your honour," replied he; "but sure enough now, that was before your honour laid all them ghosts and goblins that bothered me so o' nights."

"I understand you now," said Amherst; "I laid one set of ghosts, the cause of your terror, and you chose, immediately afterwards, to raise a fair, or rather, perhaps, I should have said a dark spirit for your own amusement."

"Why, troth, and sure enough, your honour has hit it there!—She is dark to be sure. But though she be an outlandish Frenchwoman, I'll be bound she is as warm-hearted as if she had been born in the couldest bog in all Ireland."

Here the poor fellow had recourse to the scrap of a red handkerchief he held in his hand, to wipe away a tear that was about to fall. Amherst, though so much in want of comfort himself, did not feel the less for his faithful follower, whom he

immediately endeavoured to sooth and comfort, by assuring him, that he did not anticipate that his present expedition would be of very long duration, and that, at all events, he should take care to secure him plenty of opportunity to bring his love affairs to a happy and honourable issue, before he should bid adieu to Scotland.

O'Gollochar's mind was apparently much relieved by these assurances on the part of his master. But still he did not seem to be quite satisfied.

"Och, then, dear master!" said he, "sure I thought your honour would have maybe had some small matter o' business, to settle over yonder yeresilf, afore you could think of laiving the castle in this soort o' fashion. All the Mounseers and Seignours, not forgetting Mr Robertson, who, for a matter o' that, is neither one nor the other, were so fond o' your honour, and so plaised wid yere civil ways, and your spaking to them each in his own lingo, that seeing all things going on so swimmingly in the parlour, made every soul of us merry in the hall, all with the hopes of the ould castle being spunked up wid a merry wedding."

Amherst was so suddenly taken by these simple

observations of his servant, that it was with difficulty he could restrain the feelings excited by them.

Next morning, Sir Alisander's tenant, Master Colley, was in waiting with two stout active little grey horses, fitted with tolerably good furniture. The price he demanded for them seemed to be perfectly reasonable. As he received it with his broad blue bonnet in his hand, he did not fail to season his thanks with many remarks upon the respective qualities of the "twa naigs." Brisk, as being the lighter and more spirited of the two, he recommended to Amherst for his own riding. Whilst Braidbottom's corporeal qualifications rendered him admirably adapted for a baggage horse.

"Tak my word for't, Sir, the waulees wull cling to his hinder-end just as gin they had grown there, an fient a flea will he care for the weight o' them an' the man, mair than gif they were as muckle strae."

Master Colley's advice was too good to be despised, and the arrangements were made accordingly. Macgillivray's horse was mouse-coloured, and something of the same description as those Amherst had just purchased. For him no mounted

lacquey attended, but a ragged, kilted, bare-legged, and bare-footed loon, with a bush of hair like a wisp of straw, held his stirrup, and shouldering a long peeled rung, he ran off before them with bent knees, employing his toes in a sort of limping trot, in which, though like a fox, he appeared to creep over the surface, he, in reality, went extremely fast, and with comparatively little exertion, occasionally applying the end of his rung, like a third leg, to the ground.

After mounting, Amherst bid Cleaver a hearty adieu. Then, accoutred in a sportsman's dress, girt with a handsome Spanish rapier, the gift of Lord Eaglesholme, when he first became his guest, and with his pistols at his saddle-bow, he rode on after Macgillivray. O'Gollochar followed upon Braidbottom, similarly armed, carrying a portmanteau behind, and bearing his master's rifle over his left shoulder.

Amherst jogged on with Macgillivray, listening to him rather than taking any weighty share of the conversation. Their way lay across a flat country of considerable extent, where cultivation was carried to as high a degree of perfection as was then known. The farm-houses and cottages were very

similar to each other in their architecture, except that some of the latter had stone instead of turf walls, and were thatched with bent grass from the sand hills instead of sods. Here and there appeared a gentleman's house, most of them single buildings of two or three stories, with a number of small windows, and thin gable ends, and grey-slate roofs. Some of the proprietors still contented themselves with a few straggling additions to the rugged tower, or keep, into which their ancestors had climbed for security in troublesome times. A few inexplicable dry-stone dikes, and a dozen or two of gnarled ash trees, generally formed all the embellishments of these mansions of the aristocracy.

Beyond this district, they began to rise gradually over a range of dreary moorlands, interspersed with peat bogs, swelling from the margin of the plain. As they proceeded, the landscape before them became monotonous in the extreme. Low, dull hills, of unvarying outline, and sombre hue, swept their long fatiguing lines in every direction, without offering a single object to interrupt their sameness of contour, except the smoke arising from miserable heaps of turf now and then

appearing, which Amherst, much to his surprise, learned were the houses of the inhabitants.

If this be a taste of the grandeur of Highland scenery, thought Amherst, I shall be soon satisfied with it. But, barren and dreary as it was, he felt that it was suited to the melancholy reflections into which, in defiance of the conversation of his companion, he was continually relapsing.

They rode on together for an hour or two, without any material change taking place upon the face of nature, until, coming to the brow of a hill, down which the path wound, Amherst's eyes were gladdened by one of the most beautiful scenes fancy can well imagine. They had now arrived at the edge of those hills, bounding a wide part of the valley, through which the river flowed. The vale was here more than half a mile across, and it continued to present nearly the same breadth, for about a mile downwards, to where it was closed in a precipitous pass, by the approach of the hills to each other. The plain in the bottom was partly cultivated, and partly diversified with groves, and gently swelling knolls, covered with oaks, from amongst which a little cot was seen peeping

out here and there. The river entering the valley at an abrupt angle, a view was thus obtained up the long vista of the glen it came from, where its wide stream was seen in spots, glistening from the depths of its wooded banks, the declining sun pouring a flood of yellow light down this part of its course.

The hills on the opposite side of the river were covered by an extensive natural forest of oak, pine, and birch, and the sides of those the travellers looked from were also wooded, though more partially. At the upper end of the valley, the larger river was joined by another, issuing from a deep glen, whence it came sweeping round a high conical hill.

As their beasts were painfully picking their steps down the steep and slippery path winding into the valley, through groups of trees and brushwood, Macgillivray called to Hamish, his gilly, or running footman, who had uniformly kept about ten or twelve yards before them during the whole day, and having given him some orders in Gaelic, he darted off like a weasel through the intricacies of the brushwood.

"I have sent the fellow forward to provide for

our night's quarters, Mr Oakenwold," said he to Amherst, whose mind had been so occupied, partly with his distresses, and partly with admiration of the lovely scenery around him, that he had not once thought of the approaching night, now beginning to settle down upon them.

CHAPTER IV.

Quienes dice usted que son los que estaban aqui?

MORATIN.

THE sun was down before they had reached the brink of the precipitous and thickly wooded banks, overhanging the smaller river. Here they were met by the active Hamish, who, with an expression of countenance that told them his errand had sped, said something in Gaelic to his master.

"All is right, I see," said Macgillivray; "then lead us to the ford."

The gilly laid hold of his master's bridle, and led his horse forward along the edge of the bank, Amherst and his servant following, until they came to a little ravine, through which a small rill found its way to the river. Into this dark hollow the lad dived through the brushwood, where the boughs hung so low, as to force them to

extend themselves backwards at length upon their horses.

Upon reaching the margin of the river, they found themselves just above the commencement of a boisterous stream, and at the lower end of a long deep and black pool, stretching far up between the high wooded precipices. At this place, the opposite bank became suddenly low, sinking into a meadow, or what is called in Scotland a haugh. The intervening river presented a most unpromising ford, being full of large round stones. Macgillivray begged Amherst to wait until he should first try the passage. Hamish entered, the water rising nearly to his middle, and guiding himself by feeling with the rung in his right hand, he with the other half dragged and half supported the floundering animal his master rode, its feet stumbling and slipping over the rounded and polished fragments of granite in the bottom, so that the atmosphere of water he raised by splashing hid both himself and his rider from their view. Macgillivray was no sooner in safety on the grass of the farther bank than Hamish returned for Amherst, and afterwards for O'Gollochar, whose horses he successively led over in the same way.

They now found themselves in a piece of pasture of considerable extent, having a conical hill rising from one extremity of it, whence some lofty wooded steeps bent irregularly round it towards the river, where they terminated in a bold crag hanging over the stream, about two hundred yards above its junction with the larger river, and dividing it off from its deep bed. The flat top of this crag was covered with pines of the most picturesque form and gigantic growth, and although its face overhung the stream too precipitously to admit of the growth of any thing there but a few tortuous stems, and scattered shrub-like plants, the side fronting the haugh was every where thickly covered with hard grown deciduous trees. Those growing at the bottom shot up to an immense height, being fostered by the perfect shelter of the spot, and by the deep soil into which they had thrust their roots. The stems of these sylvan giants, however, were hid by an apparently impenetrable thicket of birch, alder, hazle, black thorn, and holly, growing for a considerable breadth about the edges of the wild pasture.

To the surprise of Amherst, the thicket under the great rock seemed to be on fire, at least he

could not conceive how the flames and sparks, bickering up within it, could have existed without the conflagration of the whole. The gilly led the way across the haugh towards it, and, as they advanced, their ears were saluted by the lowing of cattle, none of which, however, were visible.

They had no sooner reached the edge of the thicket, than Macgillivray dismounted, begging of Amherst to do the same, and each leading his horse, they proceeded to follow the gilly through an almost imperceptible path, that wound under the intertwined branches, until their farther progress was arrested by a rugged, but formidable barrier, constructed with long crooked stakes, of unbarked knaggy pieces of oak, thrust deep into the ground, and crossing each other diagonally like a close wattle, the whole being united above with the living boughs of the bushes. Through this, which at first appeared to be impervious, they found a passage by a rude gate, made of similar materials. This was sentinelled by a tall raw-boned Highlander, carrying a long gun. The man bent with a submissive air, and saluted Macgillivray in Gaelic, as he admitted them within the barrier, where, among the bushes of

the thicket, here less densely set, they found a large drove of cattle resting, the ground everywhere exhibiting traces of being much trodden by their hooves. Here they relinquished their horses to the care of the gilly, and having proceeded some yards farther, not without considerable risk of tumbling over the recumbent oxen, they reached a second barrier of less substantial materials than the first, though similarly constructed. Through this they were admitted by a small wicket, opened to them as before by an armed Highlander.

They now breathed a freer air, the brushwood having ceased, and the leafy vault overhead being reared higher, on the tall upright stems of those trees growing near the base of the rock, which stood as close to each other as the ground could bear them, resembling the columns of some ancient temple.

Amherst now perceived that they were opposite to the mouth of a cavern or grotto, partly natural, and partly artificial. A projecting ledge of the rock, covering a large area underneath it, had been built up in front, with a thick wall composed of sods and stones, so as to be entirely shut

in, leaving only a low door-way for entrance. A large fire was burning before it, and a number of rough terriers, and enormous wire-haired greyhounds of the Highland breed, starting up from their slumbers around it, began to assail them, but were soon reduced to quietness by the blows and clamorous execrations of five or six Highlanders, who were engaged in supplying the fire with dry fuel, and attending to the unpolished cookery of the fragments of two sheep, which, from the recent skins hanging on the trees, seemed to have been just slaughtered. Part of the flesh was seething in a large pot, hanging over the fire, from three rugged sticks set on end, whilst green branches were preparing to broil the remainder on.

The interior of the grotto, to which they now advanced, was lighted up with large torches of bog-fir, yielding a pure and brilliant flame. At the entrance, they were met by a thin active looking little man, of middle age, in the Highland dress, with sandy hair, and a pale countenance, but with eyes glancing with a peculiar intelligence, curiously blended with an air of sharpness, courage, and cunning.

"Mr Macrory," said Macgillivray, as he stretched out his hand to him, "you see I have kept tryst, and have brought a friend with me also to partake of the good cheer I see you are preparing for us."

"Lochandhu," said the other, "I am glad to see you. I was beginning to think lang for you. —Sir," said he to Amherst, as he proffered him a horny hand he saw it was expected he should accept, "I am glad to see you. Any friend of Lochandhu's will be heartily welcome to such fare as I can gie. Pray, walk in, gentlemen."

Then calling to some of his people, he desired them in Gaelic to place fresh bundles of ferns for the gentlemen, which they very speedily did, tying them up so firmly, as to convert them into very pleasant seats. This was the first time Amherst had ever heard Mr Macgillivray called by the name of his estate, by which, however, he shall in future be designated, such being the universal Highland practice, where the numbers of a clan render this mode of distinction absolutely necessary.

The floor of the grotto was covered a foot or two deep with fresh gathered ferns, and a number

of small kegs, with two or three awkward looking saddles, were strewed about, whilst five or six long barrelled fowling-pieces, and one or two broad-swords, were resting against the wall. As this was all the furniture it contained, Amherst suspected that it was only a temporary place of residence. It was extremely dry and comfortable, however; the heat of the fire without, penetrated into its innermost recesses, whilst the fir-torches, stuck horizontally into the crevices of the rock, made the interior as light as day. Amherst's curiosity was much excited to know what were the habits and profession of their host, but as he saw he could not question Lochandhu, without the risk of giving offence to Macrory, he suppressed his wishes for the present.

They were no sooner seated, than he who did the honours of this strange place, speaking to one of the men in Gaelic, the fellow went to one of the kegs, and drawing a spigot, caught the liquor in a small flat silver cup, having two thin slips attached to the edge to hold it by. It was capable of containing about as much as three ordinary glasses. This he presented full to Macrory, who drank it off to the health of his guests.

It was then again filled and presented to Lochandhu, who emptied it in the same way. When it came to Amherst's turn, he drank to them, and tasting the liquor, and finding it brandy, he was about to return it to the cup-bearer. But a significant look from Lochandhu informed him that etiquette required he should finish the pledge, and, accordingly, making up his mind to submit to the customs of those with whom he now found himself, he drained it to the bottom.

"And when left ye Sir Alisander's, gentlemen, if I may ask?" said Macrory, after this prelude to conversation had been gone through; "I thought ye would ha'e been here lang afore this."

"Why, truly," said Lochandhu, "the knight is hospitable, and we got not so early off as I generally travel, nor did we much hurry ourselves by the way. Besides, I thought it was well that you should be fairly lodged before we joined you."

"It was as well," replied the other, looking askance at Lochandhu. "The beasts, as you may believe, were made to put down their cloots, and were not very long on the road; but some o' them got awa' frae us as we came down into the glen,

and it was a while before we catched them again; and then we were sic a weary time o' getting them through the fuird, that we were not that lang here afore ye."

"You seem to have made a very good market of it," said Lochandhu.

"Aye, aye—no that ill—no that ill—a' things considered; I seldom fail after my plans are aince weel laid. But saw ye ony body on the scent, as ye came alang?—Saw ye nae body looking after us?"

Here Lochandhu, suddenly glancing a particular look at him, and starting up and interrupting him, expressed his surprise that there was no appearance of supper, and began calling loudly in Gaelic to the men at the fire, as if to expedite their operations.

"Aye, aye," said he, after hearing their reply, "it is of no use to hurry them. Well, since it will be yet some time before the feast is prepared, I must ask you, Mr Macrory, to take a step to the door with me, as I have some little business to talk to you about. Mr Oakenwold," continued he, bowing to Amherst, "will, I am sure, have the goodness to pardon me for leaving him to his own meditations, which, to a hungry man, cannot be

very agreeable; but my business is not long. I wish, Sir," added he, laughing, "I had a library to offer to you here; but you see," pointing his hand round the wall, "we have neither books nor paintings to amuse you."

Amherst begged him to make no apology,—they walked out together,—and he observed them pacing along between the large stems, under the shade of the trees, at some distance beyond the fire, where its red glare penetrated sufficiently to show him that they were in very earnest conversation.

Amherst, when thus left to his own thoughts, naturally enough turned them upon the whimsical situation he now found himself in, sitting thus in a cavern of the rock, so much resembling a den of thieves, with a parcel of wild Highlanders lying round a huge fire at the entrance of it, their hands bloody from the butchering to which they had been lately applied, engaged in the operation of broiling large mishapen fragments of flesh upon the green branches, placed over red hot embers, and their countenances appearing doubly ferocious from the strong effect of light thrown on them. A little further reflection led him to be not alto-

gether satisfied with the character of Lochandhu, and he could not help thinking that he had been perhaps a little precipitate, in thus wantonly trusting himself to the conduct of one, of whom he had previously known so little. But, then, why should he doubt the character of a man who was so well received at the table of Sir Alisander Sanderson? And what possible object could he have in leading him into danger?

As he again looked out, he saw that O'Gollochar had mingled with the group at the fire. He recollected that his servant had been absent in the morning, and, suspecting he had been at Eaglesholme, he called him, in the hopes of hearing something of Miss Malcolm.

"Och! I hope your honour is not angry at me," said O'Gollochar, with a ludicrous look of apprehension.—"Sure, then, to tell your honour the truth, I just borrowed Mr Brouster's sorrel nag, Draff, and took a little walk over to Aiglesholme—your honour knows it would not have been daicent to have gone away without seeing Miss Aipindle—so I canters away as hard as ould Draff could go, and, after tying him among the rees, I goes up to the gate to the ould porter, and says

I, Mr Torr, I will be mainly obligated to ye, if ye will just go and give my compliments to Miss Aipindle, and tell her I wants to spake three words to her. But do ye think the ould bull-dog would stir?—Och! divil a foot—and he shook his head gruffly, as much as to say, you may go and be ——. But as good luck would have it, just as I didn't know what to be after doing—who comes tripping towards the gate, like any bird, but Miss Aipindle herself. Och! swate blessings on ye my dear, says I; but faith she was but a melancholy bird after all; for what with her own thoughts of leaving me, and what with the sad news she had to tell of her lady, I'm sure we both cried like a couple of nightengales."

"Good Heavens! to what sad news of Miss Malcolm do you allude?" said Amherst, with an anxiety and agitation that made him for the moment forget all care of concealment.

"Och! nought at all, dear master," replied O'Gollochar, alarmed by the earnestness of his manner. "Only she tould me her young lady had been crying her eyes out, all along of your going away. Her uncle and she, it seems, had been closeted up together for two or three hours

last night, when, all of a sudden, the bell was furiously rung, and when Miss Aipindle went up, she found the ould Lord in a great flustrification, and Miss Malcolm in a dead faint. She was immediately carried to bed, and brought to herself after some time. But she did nothing all night but cry; and Madame Bossanfield was in so terrible a taking about her, that she sat up by her bedside till morning, trying to comfort her, but the not a comfort, nor comfort, would she take at all at all, poor soul!"

Amherst's misery received a deep accession from this intelligence. He groaned inwardly; yet exerting himself to the utmost to conceal his agitation, he put a thousand questions to his servant. But he could learn no more; for, after a short interview, Epingle had been suddenly called up to her mistress, and the parting, though so tender as to wring not a few tears from O'Gollochar's eyes at the very recollection of it, had been so hasty as hardly to leave him time to say another word.

Amherst almost regretted that he had been induced so easily to quit one, whose heart was so entirely devoted to him. He almost repented

that he had not taken Cleaver's advice, and made an attempt to rescue her from what he could not help thinking tyranny. He easily worked himself into the belief, that, if Lord Eaglesholme should still persist in opposing his wishes, and those of his niece, he should be justified in taking any means to relieve her from such oppression.

As he was in the midst of such reflections as these, Lochandhu and Macrory entered, and put an end to them for the present.

"I am glad to have it in my power to announce supper, Mr Oakenwold," said Lochandhu gaily. "The grand sewer is about to bring in the golden goblets, and many a dainty dish of rarest price. But, joking apart, I wish you may be able to partake of this our sylvan fare. To the stomach of a bare-legged Scotchman, who has been trudging the mosses and moors all day, it is indeed exquisitely palatable; but to you, who have been bred in the very lap of luxurious civilization, I fear our food will taste but coarse and homely."

Amherst assured him he was by no means very delicate in general, though at present he had not in reality much appetite.

"Well, well," said Lochandhu, "I hope the

novelty of the supper, as well as of the supper-room, may have the effect of making a young man enjoy both. I remember, when I was a lad, I used to prefer lying in the heather all night, let the weather be what it might, to the softest and warmest bed in my father's house. But although I don't fear doing so even now, when occasion requires it, the glory and the novelty of the feat have lost their relish for me.—But here comes the smoking cogue!"

As he said this, one of the Highlanders entered, bearing a broad deep vessel, constructed of staves and hoops, full of smoking hot broth of a very substantial description, being made of great quantities of mutton boiled down to rags, and thickened with oatmeal and shredded onions. This was propped up on some bunches of ferns, and the gentlemen and Macrory drew their fern cushions around it. A deep wooden bowl, and a horn spoon, was handed to each of them, and they began to help themselves from the cogue, that threw up fresh steams every time it was stirred, like the partial eruptions of a half extinguished volcano. Amherst, although he did not much admire the appearance of this dish, imitated the

others, and helped himself to some of its contents; nor did he find it altogether so unpalatable as he had anticipated.

This *entrée* was followed by another of similar shape and size, heaped up with hissing fragments of broiled mutton, sending forth a very savoury steam, and a knife and fork, drawn from a dirk-case, were handed to Amherst, together with some hot oaten cakes, baked on a flat stone, and toasted before the fire. The viands were by no means uninviting, and although Amherst's sickness of heart had robbed him of his appetite, the other two did not fail to do ample justice to them, ever and anon washing the morsels of food down with a tasse of brandy.

When they had finished their meal, the cogues were carried out to the fire, where O'Gollochar and the Highlanders speedily cleared them out, assisted by the dogs, who stood by, and alertly caught up the offals, both cooked and raw, which were thrown to them. Nor was brandy awanting at this second table, being drank from small wooden queaghs, made with narrow staves of different-coloured woods nicely hooped together. The liquor went frequently round; but, although

a great deal was drank by each individual, there did not appear the slightest approach to intoxication.

The conversation within the grotto during the meal, and during the short time after it, employed in sipping brandy, chiefly turned on the subject of deer-stalking, and the chace of different animals, objects of sport to the Highlanders. Lochandhu and Macrory each narrated various anecdotes relating to such toils, and told of many a feat they had personally performed. At length all rattling of horn-spoons, and crunching of jaws, having ceased in the neighbourhood of the fire, Macrory called to his people, who brought in large additional bundles of dry fern, and made up three very luxurious beds, and Amherst, glad to be permitted to retire into the society of his own thoughts, however gloomy, immediately wrapped himself up in his cloak, and took possession of one of them, Lochandhu and Macrory soon afterwards following his example.

The lights in the grotto were then extinguished; a watch was set to keep up the fire; O'Gollochar threw himself on the ground near his master; and such of the Highlanders who were

not on duty as sentinels, disposed of themselves, each according to his own fancy, forming a sort of group just within the entrance.

Amherst lay for some time awake. All was still, save only the muffled sound of the rushing river, and the deep breathing of the sleepers around him; or the drowsy tapping of the man stationed at the fire, as he poked together and arranged the half burned fragments of wood, with the end of a stake; or the smothered growl, or half uttered whine of the dogs, as they urged the fancied chace in dreams. At last he also yielded to the gentle influence, and, fatigued by his mental sufferings, his want of rest the night before, and the exercise he had undergone during the day, he dropt by degrees into profound oblivion.

CHAPTER V.

We see the great effects of battles by sea; the battle of Actium decided the empire of the world.

BACON.

What art thou, whose heavy looks foretell
Some dreadful story hanging on thy tongue?

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the day that Amherst left Sanderson Mains, Sir Alisander's party was augmented by the august presence, and illuminated by the rubicund nasal promontory of Dr Partenclaw, who came puffing up to the door some hours before dinner, mounted on a tall, lean, wind-galled horse, that looked like a piece of animated timber. A spectator might have thought that the spindle shanks of the rider were the prime movers of the automaton animal; and the Doctor himself experienced all the fatigue of limb, attaching to the modern hero of the velocipede, without enjoying a tenth part of the celerity of mo-

tion, given by that whimsical machine. Besides being an excellent country surgeon, as times went, Partenclaw was a charitable good sort of a man upon the whole, and being always jocular and familiar with the servants, his arrival was usually greeted by them with a smile of welcome, except indeed, when he came to dose some of them with his drugs. But even in this particular, they were much more afraid of the Baronet than of his medical adviser, whose ordinary prescriptions of sack-whey, chicken-broth, beef-tea, and brandy-posset, were much more relished, than were the frequent and powerful cathartics, emetics, sudorifics, venesections, and blisters, forming the flowers of Sir Alisander's practice.

When the Doctor reached the door, the dignity of Master Duncan Brouster did not conceive itself dishonoured, by acting as groom to so eminent and agreeable a physician. He hastened to hold his bridle and stirrup, and assisted him in the somewhat difficult and tender operation, of lowering down his swag paunch from its exalted height, and guarding against the shock of too sudden a descent, with a degree of care, such as

he would have used in receiving a sack of bottled wine down the trap-door of the cellar.

"Canny wise! canny wise, Doctor! lay your hand on my shouther! there, noo, there"—with a long pause and sigh from both; "I'm heartily glad to see you, Doctor!"

"Well, Mr Brouster," said the Doctor, blowing a little before he could find breath to speak, "how goes it with you—all well, eh? stuffing in the head gone?"

"Troth, Doctor, I canna just complean very muckle, though my stamick is no just what it ought to be, and I have aye that plaguey whezzlin' about my thrapple—hugh—hugh—hugh."

"Aye, aye, I see how it is with you, Master Brouster, but I'll speak to Lady Sanderson about you, and order you a warm drink, half rum, half brandy, not over weak, well spiced with nutmeg, and softened with a table-spoonful of marmalade, to be taken at bed-time. Nothing better for composing a cough. You'll be sure to take it at bed-time, do you hear?"

"Ou aye, that I will, Doctor. I was muckle the better o' the last ye gied me."

"And how is Sir Alisander?" said the Doctor.

"Gay muckle in his frail ordinar, Doctor,—aye sair plagued wi' a queer wamblin' in his wame afore dinner, an' an awfu' stechin after-hend. But stap in, and you'll see himsell. Here, Tamas! tak the Doctor's horse, and see the poor beast weil done till."

"Aye, Thomas, my good fellow," said the Doctor, "take care of Hippocrates!"—a name given to his horse in honour of the celebrated Greek physician, but in which the classical and punning Baronet had discovered an etymon setting forth the very character of the steed himself, *hippos* being, as he said, a horse, and *crates* a crate, or pannier, or hurdle, sometimes wittily deriving this compound appellation from the prominence of the creature's ribs, so much resembling those of the hurdle, whilst at others, he attributed it to the purpose for which the animal had evidently been destined by nature, viz. for carrying the panniers of a cadger, or travelling huckster.

"Well, Doctor," said the Baronet, as Partenclaw entered, "what news with you?"

"Nothing very remarkable," said the Doctor, "only I have just learnt that our friend Fustle-

craig has had all his cattle carried away by the Highlanders last night."

"Aye, aye!" said Sir Alisander, "if that is the case, we must look after our own. Did they follow the thieves?"

"Not further than the Outlaw Well," replied Partenclaw; "but the villains had got far beyond it, and Fustlecraig's people were afraid to venture farther. But how do you find yourself to-day, my good friend?"

The very sight of his physician always did Sir Alisander a great deal of good, strange and contradictory as it may seem, by increasing for the time the number and intensity of his imaginary complaints, and thus furnishing him with the amusing occupation of talking about them. In the company of Cleaver, his mind roamed abroad from the arm-chair in which his body was confined, and travelled into all the countries the hardy navigator had visited. Cleaver, on his part, had immense pleasure in giving entertaining, though not always well-connected accounts of his numerous voyages; and the celebrated Sinbad himself was not more attentively listened to by

his porter, than he was by the listless valetudinarian. But a fresh sort of enjoyment was always opened to the Baronet by the appearance of Partenclaw,—that of detailing all the particulars of his various maladies. As the reader may not feel the same gratification in the recapitulation, we shall content ourselves with saying, that the time until dinner was fully occupied with it, much to the relief of the patient, however tedious it might have been to the Doctor.

As usual, a message was dispatched by Duncan Brouster to the parson and Mr Macflae, who, indeed, were often sent for by this trusty domestic, without any appeal to his master for orders, for Sir Alisander's wishes in this particular were so well known, that such arrangements fell entirely within the province of this his prime minister.

The dinner had passed away, as all the good things in this life must do, in succession, and the party having swallowed as much wine (Dr Partenclaw modestly and sagaciously remarked) "as would do them good," they had already joined Lady Sanderson, whom the Doctor was en-

deavouring to prevail upon to sit down to a spinet, that he might accompany her in a duet, whilst a large bowl of punch was in preparation by Mr Brouster, to be placed on a little table near the fire; the evening's enjoyment, I say, was in this stage of advancement, when the reports of several cannon coming from the sea put a stop to music and conversation, and struck them all for some moments with silence and astonishment.

Like the old charger, who snuffeth the battle from afar, and pricks up his ears at the sound of the war-trumpet, Cleaver was the first to start up, with an exclamation,

"What the devil's that?—Are they attacking the Dasher think ye?—She has but six small pops—but were I aboard her, I promise ye they should be well served.—There they go again!—bang!—bang!—these are tolerably heavy mettle.—By Jupiter I'm off!"

And bolting out at the door in three strides, he began to call for Bill Handy, a sort of amphibious valet of his, to bring him his sword and pistols, and away they went together, attended by the groom, as fast as their legs could carry

them, over the downs in the direction of the sea. The night was so far obscure, that objects at any distance were but very imperfectly visible. It was calm and serene, however, and the sound of the guns, coming from time to time full on the ear, served as a guide to their steps.

As they were hurrying on, their attention was suddenly arrested by the trampling of horses, and the confused clamour of voices, and in the imperfect light, they perceived a horseman advancing, bearing behind him something resembling a human figure, much enveloped in drapery. The horse was galloping as fast as possible under his double load, but the rider spurred him on, as if to force him to greater exertions. Beside him rode a taller man, and three or four others followed at different distances, as the speed or strength of their horses enabled them. Their course was from the shore, and so intent were they upon flight, that they did not perceive Cleaver and his attendants till they were almost upon them.

"*Ah! per Dio!*" said the leader to his companion, "'tis all over for the present. *Sangue di San Gennaro!* how unlucky we have been!

—but an hour sooner, and we might have been off in spite of that *Doganiere.*"

"A thousand curses on him!" said the other. "Oh my poor ship!—well!—but hush, here are people."——

"To the left!" exclaimed the leader.

This order was obeyed as soon as given. The leaders and the stragglers of the troop darted instantly off to the left. As they fled, some faint female shrieks reached them. Cleaver shouted to them with the voice of a Stentor; but they heeded him not. They passed away like a whirlwind, and, in a few moments, even the sound of their horses' feet was entirely lost.

"Who could those queer fellows be?" said Cleaver to the groom.

"Honest fouk, I'se warrant, Sir, wha ride wi' a keg o' brandy now an' then," replied Thomas. "By my troth, yon foremost chield was weil mounted!—Keep us a'! how he leathered awa' upon yon black naig!—an' wi' a hizzy ahint him too!"——

"Who could the woman be?" said Cleaver; "she seemed to ride with no good will."

"Faith, I daursay she's some o' their ain kind

o' cattle, nae great things!—I wadna free her to be a wee skier wi' ower muckle drink!"

The reports of the guns continued to come thicker upon them at intervals, the sound being louder also as they rose over the intervening high grounds. They hastened on, and soon reached the summit of the cliffs. There they looked out, over the sea, rendered visible to a considerable extent, by that dim species of light often reflected at night from the surface of a sheet of water, when all around it is obscure.

The shadowy forms of two vessels were perceptible at some distance in the offing; and the flashes proceeding from the renewed discharge of their guns, gave them such momentary illumination, as enabled Cleaver immediately to decide, that one of them was manœuvring to get out from the embarrassment of the land, so as to effect her escape, whilst the other was endeavouring to prevent her doing so, by running athwart her course. The cannon-shots were fired as each came within range of the other.

"It is a King's cutter attacking a smuggler," said Cleaver. "I wish I were on board the little Dasher!"

He looked towards the bay, upon the bosom of which his yacht still seemed to repose in peace.

"Aye, aye! she's safe enough I see," said he; "there she lies, like a tame duck upon a mill-pond. I'll try and get aboard of her, that I may see some of the sport.—But hay!" said he, as he looked again, "why, what the devil are they about, think ye, Bill?—I see something white yonder, as if they were hoisting the sails!—By Jupiter they are moving!"——

A flash from the guns of the vessels engaged, now showed that the Dasher was certainly getting under weigh.

"The scoundrels!" cried Cleaver, in a rage, "why did they not send for me?—would I were on board of her!—would I could find a boat!—" and then clapping a hand on each cheek, as if he could have been heard, "Illy-ho-ho-hoah-oy!" cried he, "send the boat ashore for me!"

But he might have as well roared to the man in the moon. The little Dasher gallantly cut the waves, as if with the intention of shooting ahead of the innermost of the two vessels.

Cleaver was in an ecstasy not to be conceived. Divided between the delight he experienced in

seeing his yacht behaving in so brave a manner, and the rage he felt at being cut off from all chance of participating in her glory, he shouted and stormed by turns.

"Bravo! bravo! well done, my brave boys! —Oh ye lubbers! why did ye not send for me? —That's it!—up with your little gaff!—hurrah! now she sends!—Oh! you rascal, Jack Markham, I'll never forgive you for this!—Hurrah! now they are closing upon the beggarly scoundrel!—Well done, my dear boy Jack! I'll have you made a master for this,—but oh! ye swab, why did ye not send for me?"

What Cleaver said was true. The smuggler, for smuggler she undoubtedly was, having in one of her tacks run in shore, for the purpose of taking a larger reach out, with the intention of getting beyond the cutter, ventured too much under the lee of a high headland, and, as the wind was partly off shore, it immediately becalmed her, and whilst the cutter was standing in upon her, the yacht was running right across her stern, and already fired several shots at her in passing. One of these knocked away her

boom, which was shaking loose. Cleaver sprang into the air with delight.

"Well done, Jack!—at her again, my boy! —Oh! you rascal, I'll make you suffer for this! —but damn you, I'll have you made master of an admiral's ship!"

The smuggler was manifestly in the utmost confusion. The cutter now came up within range, and gave her a full broadside. The flash of the guns upon the water was magnificent; the sea all around the vessels seemed on fire for a moment; and the broad illumination was prolonged by reflection from the high perpendicular face of the cliff. The smuggler lay abreast of it like a log, her rigging terribly shattered by the shot, whilst the sound of the discharge reverberated like thunder among the rocks. All chance of her escape was cut off; and, by the momentary gleam of the guns now fired from the Dasher, it appeared that the crew of the contraband trader had got their boats over the side next the land, and having abandoned their vessel, were already within a stone-cast or two of the shore.

Cleaver now observing that the game was up, waited not to see them take possession of the prize,

but made all haste along the cliff, with the intention of going down to the beach, to endeavour to get on board the vessel, or at least to obtain some intelligence as to the particulars of the fight, and, above all, to ascertain whether, as he suspected, the King's ship might not be that of his friend, Macauley.

He had already reached the upper part of the same small ravine he and Amherst had climbed to make observations on the night of their landing, and was about to descend into it to gain the shore, when, by the little light there was, he perceived two figures near the sainted well and fallen cross. The one, tall and majestic, appeared still more lofty from the extreme minuteness of the form it was contrasted with. From the shape and diminutive size of the lesser figure, he at once guessed it could be no other than that which he and his friend had formerly seen in the same spot.

"Gude guide us a'!" said Thomas the groom, in a low tone of voice, and with the utmost alarm, "gin yonder binna the dwarfie carlin and the warlock Lord at their cantrips—for ony sake, Sir, dinna gang farder."

Cleaver stopped for a moment, not, as may be

supposed, from any apprehension of the evil influence of their enchantments, but that he might not disturb them, and that he might the better observe their motions.

The little figure was standing elevated on a large fragment of the fallen rock, in an attitude of more than human command, her head thrown loftily back, one foot thrust forwards, and her arms extended, one of them being raised over her head as if in an appeal to Heaven, and the other pointing downwards on Lord Eaglesholme. He stood below gazing at her in the attitude of astonishment, one leg with his chest being drawn backwards from surprise, his broad Spanish hat held out in his left hand, whilst with the right he supported his weight on his sword pointed to the ground. His head was carried earnestly forwards, and his face was turned upwards, as if to catch every word that fell from the being with whom he was holding nocturnal converse.

——" To Heaven !" said she, as if concluding some powerful and energetic sentence, and her shrill voice had something indescribably appalling in it.—" To yonder pure Heaven they are gone !

—But hell itself yawns wide to receive the murderess!"

Lord Eaglesholme groaned deeply as if with some strong internal suffering, excited by her words.

"But why loiter here?" continued the female, in a rapid and agitated manner.—"Why, at least, loiter I here, while I have work to do?—The dove e'en now hangs quivering in the talons of the remorseless vultures. I must fly like the swift merlin hawk through every covert, nor stoop my wing till my quest is sped."

In concluding this sentence she sprang at once, with the bound of the light roebuck, from the elevated station she had occupied, to the grassy margin of the well. But instantly perceiving, between her and the sky, the group of figures standing at the upper part of the ravine, she whirled rapidly round, and to the great surprise of Cleaver, who kept his eyes fixedly upon her, and to the indescribable terror of his superstitious attendants, she disappeared in a manner as instantaneous, and as unaccountable, as if she had suddenly melted into air.

Lord Eaglesholme seemed to be so entranced

in the thoughts excited by her awe-inspiring words, that he remained looking upwards, as if unconscious of her absence. A spectator might almost have fancied that he was watching her track as she clove the liquid æther.

Cleaver was a good deal astonished with what he had seen and heard. But as it was disagreeable to remain longer as a spy on Lord Eaglesholme's actions, he prepared to pursue his way down the ravine, and was in the act of moving, when the terrified Thomas loudly exclaimed,—

"For gudeness sake, Captain Cleaver, dinna gang down amang thae bogles!"

Lord Eaglesholme started from his musing fit at the sound of a human voice; and hearing the name of Cleaver, which had been lately rendered familiar to him, he called out,—

"Captain Cleaver!—is Captain Cleaver there?—Is Amherst—is Mr Oakenwold there?—speak, I entreat you, and relieve my racking anxiety!"

"My Lord!" said Cleaver, bowing as he approached him—"he who has the honour of addressing you is Captain Cleaver; as for Mr Oakenwold"——

"Aye, Sir!" interrupted Lord Eaglesholme

with inexpressible eagerness, " for Heaven's sake, what of him ?—is he with you ?" and he looked eagerly about, and cast his eyes upwards to the group above, as if with the hope of detecting the figure of Amherst.

" No, my Lord, he is not with us," said Cleaver calmly ; " he went this morning on an excursion of pleasure to the Highlands."

" Pleasure !" said Lord Eaglesholme ; " pleasure did you say, Sir ! Could Amherst Oakenwold take pleasure, so soon after his separation from Eliza Malcolm ? Then his is not the heart I had read it to be."

" My Lord," said Cleaver, " I have been led innocently to use an expression, which I see is calculated to injure my young friend in your estimation, and which I only employed in its general sense. Pleasure was, indeed, very far from his thoughts. His mind was plunged in the deepest melancholy by the issue of a conversation he had with your Lordship yesterday. It was that diseased state of mind, which induces the sufferer, he knows not why, vainly to attempt to flee from his sorrows. It was this, I say, added to the wish he felt to give full obe-

dience to those implied engagements he had come under to your Lordship, and a dread lest the strength of his passion might have rendered it impossible to maintain his integrity, had he remained nearer the object of it;—it was, I may say, in obedience to your Lordship's own commands, that he forced himself away from the neighbourhood of Eaglesholme Castle!"

Lord Eaglesholme groaned audibly.—"Incomparable Amherst!" said he; then looking upwards towards Heaven, "Merciful powers! how am I the sport of untoward fate! Would to God that Amherst were here! I would tell him! ——But, alas!" continued he, as if recollecting himself after a pause, and with an emotion that powerfully agitated him, "Alas! the dear object of his hopes, and of my hopes, is no longer at Eaglesholme! Eliza Malcolm has this very night been carried off by a band of unknown ruffians, who broke into the Castle."

"Good Heavens! Miss Malcolm carried away!" exclaimed Cleaver, petrified with amazement. "How—when—and in what manner, I beseech you?"

Lord Eaglesholme then proceeded to give

him a hasty outline of the mysterious affair; but we must tell it more fully to the reader.

The information Amherst obtained from his servant in the grotto has already informed us of the affliction Miss Malcolm was thrown into, by those communications her uncle made to her after Amherst's departure from the Castle of Eaglesholme. Being carried to bed immediately after the conference, she remained all next day in a state of misery too dreadful for description. The good Madame Bossanville wept unceasingly, whilst, with the tenderest affection, she vainly endeavoured to console her beloved charge, though conscious that she possessed not the means of doing so. The hopes of Miss Malcolm were so cruelly crushed in the very setting of their blossom, and her heart was so torn, that much as she loved her uncle, she could not muster strength and resolution enough to join him at dinner, where her emotions must have necessarily been subjected to the observation and remarks of the domestics.

At Madame Bossanville's earnest entreaty, she exerted herself to move into the drawing-room in the evening, with the intention of receiving Lord

Eaglesholme there. But she had no sooner entered it than her guitar, her drawing instruments, nay, almost every piece of furniture in the apartment her eyes rested on, brought the figure of Amherst fresh before her mind, and recalled all those tender hours they had so lately spent together, giving way to the enjoyment of those exquisite feelings arising from a virtuous and reciprocal passion, and in the full anticipation of an immediate union. How agonizing the events of one little day! The images which crowded to her imagination powerfully overcame her, and just as Madame Bossanville was preparing to go to Lord Eaglesholme to invite him to the drawing-room, Miss Malcolm burst into an agony of grief so violent, that the compassionate old lady saw the necessity of postponing the interview for some time, to allow the fulness of her heart to exhaust itself, before she should be subjected to that restraint, which she knew she would impose on herself, to alleviate her uncle's great anxiety regarding her.

Madame Bossanville, therefore, seated herself in a large fauteuil, with her back to the windows, and with her eyes fixed in melancholy sympathy

on her young friend, who had thrown herself into a high-backed sofa, and was giving vent to her affliction with her head buried in the folds of a shawl. She watched her with painful solicitude, until the paroxysm of grief had in some measure expended itself; and her sighs and the throbbings of her bosom were gradually subsiding, when, as she was about to offer a few words of comfort, her ear was struck with a sound resembling the sharp click of the spring bolt of the glass-door, immediately behind her, as if turned by some hand.

She was in the act of stretching round, to gain a view backwards, beyond the high enclosure of the chair she was in, and in doing so, she glanced her eyes across the field of a large mirror, on the opposite wall, which reflecting the image of that side of the room behind her, showed her the glass-door open, and the figure of a man muffled up, with his face almost entirely concealed beneath the shade of a very broad hat, stealing forwards upon them.

Before she had more than time to utter a faint scream, four or five ruffians, similarly disguised, were in the room, and Miss Malcolm and she

were both seized at the same moment. All farther power of alarm was instantly taken from her, by the application of a shielded gag to her mouth, and in the space of a second or two, she was tied to her chair in so effectual a manner, that she could neither move hand nor foot; whilst Miss Malcolm was as instantaneously shrouded up in a large cloak, deprived of all possibility of resistance, or even of utterance, lifted up by a man, carried rapidly away through the glass-door, and borne off through the garden almost in a state of insensibility.

The party having hurried on with her towards the farther extremity of the peninsula, she felt herself lowered down, as if by means of a ladder, over the rampart wall of the enclosure, and placed in a boat that immediately pushed off from the shore; and, from the speed with which the passage was effected, she guessed that she had crossed one of the arms of the bay to the nearest landing-place. There she was lifted from the boat, and the cloak being removed, she was permitted to breathe more freely for a few moments, when she perceived some persons waiting under the shade of the trees with horses. A hat and mantle belonging to her-

self, snatched up by the villains in the apartment where she was seized, were now hastily adjusted to her head and person, and as she was attempting to scream out, she was again wrapped up in the large cloak, in such a manner as to deafen her cries, and placed with the utmost expedition on a pad behind one of the men, and being strapped to his back, so as to remove all chance of her falling, the whole troop set off at full gallop through the wild and unfrequented chace, and then over the high downs towards the sea.

There the reports of cannon were distinctly heard coming from the water, and the party halted for some time on the brow of the precipice, in great confusion, as if their plans had been disconcerted by some unforeseen event. After a hasty debate, the import of which her terror and agitation enabled her to gather but very imperfectly, they again turned their horses' heads, and galloped towards the country.

A few minutes had hardly elapsed after the perpetration of this outrageous act, when Lord Eaglesholme, impatient to see his niece, tapped gently at the door of the drawing room. After having two or three times repeated his signal,

with that delicacy with which he always approached the abode of the ladies, he retired, and, ringing for Epingle, who, in the solitude of her apartment, was employed in giving way to her own woes, he sent her to inquire whether his niece would receive him, while he stood without, waiting for admission.

The girl had no sooner entered than she uttered a loud scream, and fell senseless on the floor. Filled with alarm, Lord Eaglesholme rushed into the apartment, when, to his astonishment and dismay, he found Madame Bossanville in the state she had been left by the ruffians. He hastened to release her, and soon learned from her all the dreadful particulars she had witnessed.

Frantic with despair, he called his servants, and searched through every part of the garden with torches. Numerous steps were traced across some of the new dug borders, where many of the plants and flowers had been broken and trodden down by the hasty feet of the ravishers. At length they were tracked to that part of the wall where the ladder, left behind them in their hurry, was still standing. But here all traces were of course lost. Once on the lake, their probable point of

landing became mere matter of conjecture. In a state of agitation bordering upon frenzy, he returned to the Castle, and dispatched servants in all directions, with a thousand different and even contradictory orders. As for himself, seizing his sword, he waited not for a horse, but hurrying out at the great gate, and over the draw-bridge, he flew with the rapidity of thought through the woods, and over the downs towards the cliffs. Why he went there, no one but himself could have explained; but, whatever were the reasons that urged him thither, his having taken that way produced the meeting with Cleaver the reader has so lately been made acquainted with.

"My Lord," said Cleaver, after listening to Lord Eaglesholme's short narration, "I think I can throw some light upon the track of these villains." And so saying, he told him what he had met with soon after quitting Sanderson Mains on his way to the shore, and described as nearly as he could the direction the party seemed to have taken.

From Cleaver's account, Lord Eaglesholme's suspicions at once rested on the Castle of Moatmallard as the most probable place of temporary

retreat for the ruffians. The reader may perhaps remember, that this ruined fortalice was formerly mentioned, though not by name, as forming a prominent feature in the uninteresting country near Sanderson Mains, being situated on a green mound at the upper end of the lake.

"From all the circumstances," said Cleaver, "it strikes me, that the event of Miss Malcolm being carried off, and that of the appearance of the smuggling vessel, which has just been captured, have somehow had a secret connection together. It is highly probable, that when first descried by the revenue cutter, the smuggler must have been lying off and on, by appointment, to take the rascals on board with their prey. The few words I caught from the scoundrels, as they flew past me on the downs, may have alluded to the disappointment of their expectations in this particular."

Lord Eaglesholme perfectly agreed with him in his conjectures, and became still more firmly of opinion, that Moatmallard was the place to which the villains must have fled; and both joined in thinking, that the crew whom Cleaver had seen escape in the boats, would also seek shelter in

these ruins, which had been long used, as a place of concealment, by the illicit traders of that coast.

"Come, then, my Lord," said Cleaver, with great inward satisfaction at the prospect of having a brush with them after all, "let us hasten to the beach. We can send aboard of my yacht for some of my lads; then we'll rouss up their Castle Mallard for them,—destroy the whole nest of them,—and bring off Miss Malcolm in triumph. But, let me tell you, my Lord, the less time we lose, the better chance we have of nabbing the rascals; for it is likely they won't choose to harbour very long so near the scene of their villany."

Lord Eaglesholme warmly expressed his thanks to Cleaver for his generous offer, and readily accepted his proffered assistance.

CHAPTER VI.

Stay by me; thou art resolute and faithful:
I have employment worthy of thy arm.

DRYDEN.

THEY were hastening down to the beach, when, as they reached the narrow bottom of the ravine, they met a party winding slowly upwards. They had no sooner come near enough to enable them to distinguish persons, than Cleaver recognized the man at the head of them to be his old shipmate Captain Macauley. The greeting between these two friends, who had sailed round the world together, but who had not met for eight or nine years, was hearty and sailor-like.

"Well, Macauley, my boy!" said Cleaver, after their first salutations were over, "I think you soon settled the hash of that beggarly brandy merchant. I congratulate you most sincerely, and I hope she will turn out a good prize; but I can't help regretting that I was not aboard of my little punt, that I might have had the pleasure

of fighting along side of you once more upon salt water, were it only for old acquaintance sake. However, I saw the action from the cliff, and I was glad to perceive that my little cockle shell did all she could to help you."

"Help us!" said Macauley, "aye that she did; why let me tell ye, that was a rare good manœuvre of honest Jack Markham's.—Had he not run athwart her so gallantly, she might have fetched another tack,—aye and might have given me a great deal of trouble too, for the jade sailed like a swallow."

"But, stay, my gallant fellow," said Cleaver, "are you inclined for a little more tussling before you sleep? Because, if you are, you may come along with us; for we are going to attack the very citadel where the whole rascals of them have taken refuge, and where, very likely, they have stowed away most of their goods. Though I was prevented having a touch at these cocks with you at sea, I have no objections to admit you to a share of the glory we shall gain by blowing up their castle ashore, and, moreover,—you shall have all the profit."

"That's very kind in you, my good fellow," said

Macauley laughing. " I assure you, my lads will not be sorry to fall in with some kegs of brandy and bales of tobacco ; for although we got hold of the nut, it unluckily had no kernel. She seemed to have been already cleaned out, and though apparently well victualled, had nothing on board her but ballast."

" Well, then," said Cleaver, " come along.—But, stay !—We must have some more hands with us. Let me see, who have we here ?"

" It's me, your honour," replied Jack Markham. " I came ashore with the Captain here, to show him the way to Sanderson Mains."

"Oh you good-for-nothing vagabond !—to allow me to remain on shore, and so little way off too, without ever so much as sending me notice of the fun that was going on !—I've a great mind to stop your grog, and give ye salt water, ye rascal.—But ye dog, I'll have ye made a Master for your gallantry ; though, damn ye, I'll always bear ye a grudge for cutting me out of such an evening's amusement !—But who are these men with you ?"

" Three of Captain Macauley's lads, your honour, and there are four more in his boat below ;

your honour's boat also is on the beach with her six hands."

"Then," said Cleaver, "with your permission, Macauley, we'll take five men from each boat's crew, and let the odd ones paddle back to the vessels, that they may tell the people aboard to keep a good look-out:—and with these ten, and Lord Eaglesholme, and you, and me, we shall make a devil's dozen, without counting Bill Handy, who is within a whistle of us,—enough, in all conscience, I think, to encounter twice as many of these scoundrels—But, hold!—are we all well armed?"

"There are arms and ammunition enough in both boats for the whole party," said Macauley; "for, to tell you the truth, when I found that the villains had made good their retreat ashore, I thought it not unlikely that they might attack us as we landed on the beach. I therefore took the precaution to be prepared for whatever might happen."

"Be off then, Jack!" said Cleaver, "and bring up the lads, with every thing necessary, as fast as you can; and take care, do you hear, and send orders aboard, to make the people alert to prevent surprise."

"There is little danger of any such thing being attempted," said Macauley, "for I anchored with the prize so close to your yacht, that they are within hail of each other."

"That's well," said Cleaver. "Now, Sandy, while Jack's away, you will have time enough to tell us how you first got sight of this same smuggler."

"That's soon done," said Macauley. "After I received your letter, I thought it was just as well to take a trip over here to look out for you, particularly as Sir Alisander Sanderson is an old acquaintance of mine, and I haven't broke a biscuit in his house for many a long day. So you see, after hauling into the bay here, with the which I am very well acquainted, I espied the yacht, and from the very build of her, I immediately guessed her to be yours. Having given orders to my people to take a station near her, I got into my boat, and went aboard of her, to see whether I could get any information about you. So as I was standing on deck talking to Markham about you, and the Random was preparing to take up her ground, we espied a strange-looking sail coming round the easter headland,

as if for the purpose of sailing right into bay. But no sooner had the jade caught a sight of the Random, whose cut you may believe is pretty well known upon this coast, than she immediately wore, and stood off, evidently with the intention of keeping out of our view if she could. But faith we were too sharp for her, and this manœuvre of hers only the more convinced me that my first suspicions were well founded.

"I hailed the Random immediately, and sung out to the people not to let go the anchor, and to get up her sails directly; and getting aboard of her as fast as I could, I ran out to sea, carrying as much canvas as she could bear, but without showing any immediate intention of attacking. The enemy guessing what we were about, attempted to gain an offing, but although she sailed uncommonly well, I succeeded in shooting a-head of her, which I had no sooner accomplished, than I fired a gun to bring her to. To this she paid no attention, but began to try to make the thing out by manœuvring, during all which time we kept peppering her whenever we came within reach of her. But ——"

"Thank ye, thank ye, Sandy," said Cleaver,

interrupting him familiarly. "I know all the remainder of the story, for I saw the whole matter from the cliff,—(a murrain on that fellow who didn't send for me, else I might have been in the very thick of the thing,)—so we shall spare you the rest of your wind, for you will want it all to enable you to climb up this cursed ravine, that always makes me blow like a porpus. But stay,—if I mistake not, I think I hear the lads coming."

As he said so, Jack Markham came singing merrily up from the beach, attended by six stout active sailors, all in high glee, at the very thought of the work they were to be employed on. And after every individual of the party had been properly appointed with arms, they set forward.

The direct way to Moatmallard lay very close by Sanderson Mains. Cleaver, therefore, sent Bill Handy forward, with Thomas the groom, who had at last ventured to join the party, even although he saw the warlock Lord at the head of it, to report the arrival of his old acquaintance Macauley, and the capture of the smuggling vessel. Bill was also instructed to tell the Ba-

ronet that they had still a piece of work to perform, which would probably occupy them the greater part of the night.

Having given him these orders, Cleaver appointed a particular spot, near the corner of one of the Baronet's inclosures, and not far from the house, but avoiding the village, where Bill was instructed to wait for him, and he desired him to make all haste. Handy ran off on his errand with the utmost speed.

The Baronet was sitting, anxiously waiting for some intelligence of Cleaver, whilst Doctor Partenclaw and the others had already nearly emptied Mr Brouster's large bowl, when Bill Handy was announced. He was immediately ordered up stairs, and Sir Alisander listened with the most intense interest to his spirited account of the sea-fight, and the capture of the Charming Sally. His intelligence, however, did not appear to be quite so agreeable either to Partenclaw or to Macflae, who threw lugubre looks at each other, as if all hopes of cheap brandy and claret had with them fled for a time.

Bill Handy delivered the remainder of his message, and concluded by urging the necessity

of his immediate departure to meet his master. The Baronet instantly ordered Duncan Brouster to carry some home-brewed ale, and some bread and cheese, down to the pathway, to meet the party. This command the jolly butler lost no time in preparing to execute, and his bustle upon this occasion, being rather more than ordinarily great, excited much curiosity among the inmates of the kitchen; and the more, when they learned from Thomas, the groom, that the warlock Lord was in the company.

Neither Mr Brouster, nor the other servants, would have been desirous to go near him, especially at such a time of night, had they not heard that he was accompanied by so many Christian people like themselves. Even as it was, they required the countenance of one another to give them nerve to face him; and honest Duncan, upon consideration, was by no means sorry to see them, men and women, creeping down the inside of the dike after him, in a long string, holding each other by the skirts.

Having reached the stile at the end of the wall, opposite the spot Captain Cleaver had appointed, Mr Brouster took care to have the large basket

planted in the middle of the path, some time before the party came up; and having thus disposed of it full in view, he again retired behind the wall, where he stood with his round ruby visage, glaring over it, in the partial obscurity of the night, like the disk of the sun, when in a frosty morning of December, shorn of his beams, he shines red through the smoky atmosphere of the city.

Cleaver and the party had no sooner appeared, than Duncan, clearing his throat, and coughing up his courage with three or four very considerable hems, addressed him from the secure position he had taken.

"Captain," said he, "his honour, Sir Alisander, has sent me out wi' a kebbock an' a whin baps, to be a bite till you and your men, and twa or three bottles o' strong yill, to wash the eatables down wi';—tak' care, tak' care, Captain! or ye'll maybe coup ower the basket, an' hurt your shins, an' brek a' the bottles!"

"Many thanks to Sir Alisander," said Cleaver, "it was very considerate of him indeed; the refreshment will be very grateful to the lads. Nay, I don't think I shall be the worse for a mouthful of bread and cheese, and a drop of

your ale, myself. Pray, come forth, then, Mr Brouster, and lend a hand in cutting the eatables, and opening the bottles with as much expedition as may be, for we have much business before us, and time presses."

Duncan was not prepared for such a demand. He nudged some of the other servants who were near him. "Rab," said he, in an under voice, to one of them, "gang awa' out man, and draw the bottles.—Ritchie, canna ye budge?—what the deil ails ye, man?—dinna ye no hear his honour, the Captain?"

But Rab shrunk away up the dike-side, and Ritchie followed him; and the rest, taking one look at the grusome Lord, their fears overcame their curiosity, and some beginning to set the example of retreat, the alarm became general, and, without the order they had preserved in their advance, they ran off, pell-mell, with the utmost precipitation.

Seeing himself thus deserted, Mr Brouster's terrors were considerably augmented. But he felt that, consistently with the dignity of his office, he could not so easily abandon his post; yet to go beyond the protecting wall, his apprehen-

sion told him was impossible. In this dilemma, he saw that a small sacrifice of his importance was absolutely indispensable. Drawing, therefore, from his pocket that badge of his office yclept a cork-screw, which he never willingly parted with to mortal man, he, after two or three of his usual preparatory hems, addressed Bill Handy over the dike, in a rather tremulous voice:—

"Maister William," said he, "ye'll find a muckle knife in the basket among the lave o' the things; and here, tak' haud o' my cork-screw,—but tak' special care o't, an' put it in your pouch after you're dune wi't, for it's an auld servant o' mine, and I wadna like to lose it.—An' noo, I maun awa' hame, for they had just toomed the bowl as I cam oot, an' I'll be wanted to mak' anither yane."

"By my honour," said Cleaver, "but the last bowl looked well, though I had no taste of it; and, without any reflection on your excellent ale, I should not be sorry if we had just such another here, for, without flattery, yours is the best punch I ever drank."

But this compliment to his punch-making powers was lost upon Mr Brouster, who was no soon-

er rid of his cork-screw, than, ducking below the dike, he ran crouching along homewards, like a hare stealing away, with as much expedition as his fat legs could carry his overgrown body, frequently looking backwards, like that timorous animal of chace, and half believing that the warlock Lord himself was pursuing him, in some hideous and terrifying shape.

Handy did the butler's duty so well, that none of the party felt the want of the butler. The bread and cheese were soon discussed, and the bottles emptied, and the basket having been lifted behind the dike, the whole party set briskly forward on their enterprise in admirable spirits and condition. The fears of the servants secured them from the chance of their march being preceded by any alarm that might disconcert their attack.

The Castle of Moatmallard occupied an artificial mound, or, to speak more correctly, a natural mound artificially shaped, standing at the upper extremity of the lake in which the mound itself had probably at one time been an island. Leaving to geologists and antiquarians to determine whether the gradual filling up of the lake might have so far restricted its waters, as to have con-

verted the shallows in its neighbourhood into a marsh; and whether this happened before or after the period of the erection of the castle, which was ascribed to very remote antiquity; we shall proceed to give an account of its state at the time of the attack upon it.

The surrounding marsh was everywhere very deep, and it was, moreover, of such chaotic consistency, as perfectly to realize the poet's description,—

"Instabilis tellus innabilis unda."

Its surface was quite impassable,—nay, it was so treacherous, that it became the grave of many a stray horse and cow, as well as of many an unlucky urchin, who, tempted by the desire of robbing the nests of the numerous aquatic birds building among the reeds, had ventured into it on crazy planks, or old doors, which, sinking under them, had left them to be swallowed up in its black abyss. There was but one passage of approach to the castle, from the terra firma, and that was by a causeway of twelve or fourteen feet wide, formed of large stones laid together, and running in a straight line directly up to the opening in the outer work.

This was a rampart formed of earth, and constituted the exterior side of a broad moat, that encircled the bottom of the green mound. The ditch was still amply supplied with water, from the natural wetness of the situation, though the growth of aquatic plants in its bottom had considerably diminished its original depth, and rendered it fordable in many places. The mound within rose in a steep slope to a considerable height, crowned by the outer walls of the fortalice running round its brink. These were defended at their angles by five round towers, and enclosed a considerable space of level ground, from the middle of which arose the keep, a large square mass of masonry. The remains of numerous subsidiary buildings were attached to the walls around the inside, but they, as well as the walls themselves, were so dilapidated, as to be scaleable in many places. When the whole was in a state of perfect repair, the only entrance to the court-yard was by a gateway, flanked by two small square towers, looking directly towards the causeway.

Cleaver, who was naturally curious in such matters, had been frequently led to visit Moat-mallard in the course of his duck-shooting expe-

ditions, so that he had a very good general notion of the defences still possessed by the place. It was therefore agreed that the command and direction of the assault should be left to him.

The party advanced along the causeway with the most profound silence and caution, their leader being perfectly aware, that by gaining this important passage, they secured all who might be within the castle. With that prudence characterizing an old man-of-war's-man, Cleaver halted his troops close to the outer rampart, and having concealed them behind it, he determined to send forward an intelligent scout, to discover whether the enemy were on the alert, and if so, in what numbers. Bill Handy was the person selected for this duty, and we shall now see how he performed it.

Bill then stole forwards, and picked his way through the shallowest part of the ditch, at a place immediately opposite to the opening in the rampart, where there was a sort of passage, and where indeed the mud and water did not rise higher than the middle of his leg, and then climbing the mound, he effected an entrance under the ruined gateway without molestation. He had

no sooner gained the platform of the court-yard, than he perceived a light issuing, as it were, from the ground, within a yard or two of the foundation of the wall of the keep. The rays shot upwards, in an oblique direction, and formed an illuminated spectrum on the broad side of the building, at nearly half its height, but yet so vivid as to enable him to distinguish the leaves of the ivy which were touched by it. Judging from the elevated angle formed by the rays, he was convinced that they must proceed from some considerable depth underground; he therefore determined, in the first place, to ascertain what occasioned them. But, in order to get sufficiently near the spot, without running the risk of being observed from any of the windows or loop-holes of the keep, he was obliged to make a circuit under the shade of the outer wall, and then to cross the court-yard, opposite to one of the angles of the building, whence he stole along close to the base of the keep.

When he had got near enough to the light, he discovered that it issued from a very wide rent in the arch of a subterranean vault, whence he heard several voices arising. Kneeling down, he

crept forward upon all-fours, with the greatest caution, towards the crevice. There, many of the stones having been dislodged by time, he had a very ample view downwards, through the ivy and weeds overhanging the opening.

He now perceived that the rays of light arose from the embers of a wood fire, placed a little to one side. Around it were seated a dozen fellows, all well armed, and numerous ship muskets rested against the wine casks, and heaps of small kegs, boxes, and bales, piled up every where around the walls of the place. They appeared to be occupied in finishing the remains of some provisions they were handing about, and a flask of brandy was in the act of performing its regular circle among them. The conversation, therefore, arose but at intervals.

"Well, Master Tomkins," said one of them, "I can't conceive, after all, for the life of me, why you should have persisted in trying the bay, after the blink we had of that suspicious sail before sun-down?"

"I tell ye," replied the man he addressed, "I had the captain's express orders, to call in for him at the very time I made the

attempt. The mouth of the cove of Eaglesholme was the place appointed for the boat to wait for him. Then who the devil was to suppose that the strange sail we saw at such a distance was to turn out to be that hiccory-faced rascal, Macauley ?"

" I wish from my soul that Davy Jones had him," said the other. " That damned splinter has given my leg a plaguy scratch—I wish I had a doctor to it."

" Clap a plaget of tow steeped in brandy to it, man," said another speaker.

" Why, zounds !" exclaimed another, " your'n an't half so bad as this here bruise in my head. I swear I'm quite dumbfounded by it."

" But I say, old Davy Stronach," said a fellow to an old grey-haired man, who had the appearance of a countryman, " did the Captain, when he called here, leave no directions about what we are to make of ourselves ?"

" No !" said the man gruffly.

" Why, damn it," said another, " I think he might have had some thought about us too. Methinks it does not look over well, that he should clap up his sky scrapers, and be off, no one knows

whither, without troubling his nob about what is to become of his lads."

"Why, you senseless grampus," said Tomkins, "as he told Davy that he had seen the state of matters from the cliffs, he must have naturally supposed that we were all to be taken prisoners, in which case, any thought of his would have been but of little use to us. Fancy yourself peeping through the iron bars, Jem, what good would the Captain's thinking have done ye?—But he, no doubt, thought, that, if any of us did escape, we should come here, and lie snug till our consort arrives, and then get aboard of her till something else can be rigged up for us."

"A pretty comfortable birth we shall have of it truly!" said the man who had complained of the wound in his leg, "to be mewed up in such a devil's den as this! Why, damn it, one might as well be in prison at once. 'Tis very well as a storehouse for these bales and casks,—but for a habitation, methinks it is something of the dreariest, with nothing to do but to count one's fingers.—'Twere better by half to take a turn upon the highway."

"Devil's den, indeed!" said another man. "It

seems to me to be fit for nothing but thieves and murderers."

"Well, an it were so," said Tomkins, "methinks you should not consider yourself ill lodged, Master Morris, after skivering that exciseman on the Welsh coast in the way you did. Do you remember that story?"

"I do," said the other impatiently; "but don't talk of that. Besides, I don't hold the sticking of an exciseman to be any great matter to men in our line."

"Aye, aye, in fair fighting, I grant you," said Tomkins; "but to run the fellow through the back, during a parley, in mere wantonness!—Take care," continued he, winking to some of the others, "for they say the devil and the exciseman are great chums.—So look sharp that Old Nick doesn't pounce upon you in this den of his, as you call it, and carry you off to a warm birth among his hot coals."

Bill Handy, thinking he had now had enough of their conversation, prepared to steal away, by slowly and silently raising himself from his hands and knees. But as he was in the act of resuming the erect posture, the toe of his shoe, somehow or

other, got entangled among the reticulated fibres of the ivy, that mantled about the edges of the opening,—he tripped, lost his balance, and sailor though he was, he went head foremost rumbling down upon the smugglers below, the pistols in his belt going off in his descent, just as the last speaker had ended his warning about the devil.

"Lord have mercy on us, there he is!" cried the murderer, and in terrible alarm, they all scrambled, over one another, into a corner, some calling out "the devil!" and others "the exciseman!"

Bill, though he fell on a heap of straw, was yet so stunned for some moments, that he was unable immediately to recover his legs; and Tom kins, who had been seized by the same panic as the rest, happening to look round, and seeing that it was nothing after all but a man, sprang towards him before he could rise, and seizing him, and calling loudly for assistance, they hastily bound his arms and feet, and proceeded to interrogate him. Bill, in the vain hope of deceiving them, began at first to put on an air of much simplicity:—

"Lord, gemmen," said he, "I be's but a poor

coontry lad, as ha' coomed a bird-nesting, after the owls as builds in them 'are ould walls."

"None o' your tricks, master," said Tomkins, "that is not the sort of tongue you should have put into your chops, if you had wanted to humbug us. You must have been but a short time in Scotland, since you cannot ape the lingo better. Besides, do you usually go owl-catching with pistols in your belt, and a hanger by your side?"

Bill seeing that his attempt at deception would not go down with them, resolved to maintain an obstinate silence, heroically making up his mind to whatever fate might befall him.

"May I never pull another rope!" said one of the fellows, looking at his face with some attention, and holding a bit of lighted wood to it that he might see it the better, "May I never see salt water again, if this be'nt a man belonging to that Kentish yacht as has been laying so long in the bay, and as helped to run us up to-night with its damned pop-guns."

"Let's murder him!"—cried Morris.—"Let's strangle him directly!"—"Let's shoot him through the head!"—"Let's pin him through

the guts with a sword!"—"Let's roast him alive!"—cried half a dozen of them at once.

"Avast," said Tomkins interfering, "that may be all very well by and by, but we had better stand to our arms now. I'll be bound this fellow hasn't come alone. You may depend upon it there's a party not far off. Stand to your arms I say, and let's try to gain the causeway without loss of time, for we're in a trap here. This here chap may have been sent forward as a scout, and if so, the rest of them may be still so far off, as to enable us to secure our retreat, should they prove too many for us. Bear a hand I say, my lads, and arm, for we have no time to lose!"

In an instant Bill Handy was forgotten amidst the bustle and confusion that ensued. All was clamour, and rattling of muskets, and seizing of swords, and bracing on of belts, and arming in all manner of ways, and in a few minutes the whole of them sallied forth, leaving Bill alone, lying upon the heap of straw where they had thrown him.

CHAPTER VII.

Solyman resolved to assault the breach.

KNOLLIS'S *History of the Turks.*

Again the flame
Flashed thick and fast—a volley came,
Then echoed wildly from within,
Of shout and scream the mingled din,
And weapon-clash, and maddening cry.

SCOTT.

CAPTAIN CLEAVER had already become a little impatient at the long stay his reconnoitrer was making, and was even beginning secretly to dread that some accident had befallen him, when he espied the figure of a man under the shadow of the broken gateway. He earnestly watched his motions, and observing that he was stealing towards them, he imagined it was Bill Handy returning; but he thought it advisable to challenge him.

"Bill! Bill!" he cried in an under voice—"is that you, my lad?"

But observing that the figure, instead of advancing or replying to him, hastily retreated within the archway again,

"I fear," said he, turning round to Lord Eaglesholme and Macauley, "I fear we are discovered, and if so, depend upon it poor Bill has been seized. We have nothing for it now but to advance with caution, and be ready to act with vigour, as circumstances may direct."

In obedience to his orders the party was filing out from behind the rampart, when a volley of musketry was fired from the wall upon them, and two of the Random's men fell severely wounded.

Cleaver unsheathed his sabre, and shouting out, "Now, my brave lads! now's your time!—at them, my boys, like lions!" he rushed fearlessly and inconsiderately into the moat, and, in his eagerness to lead the attack, slipped from the narrow road-way by which Bill Handy had passed it, and which was only covered by a foot deep of mud and water, and went souse over head and ears into the profoundest part of it. Some of the men were hastening to his assistance, but the gallant sailor rose from the bottom, and, shaking his ears like a great Newfoundland dog,

he bawled out, "Never mind me, you rascals!—on then!—on then, I say!" and then swashing through the stagnant water and weeds, with a sort of half swimming, half scrambling exertion, still, however, keeping a firm hold of his sword, he grappled with some reeds growing on the bank, and, after an unsuccessful effort or two, he at last succeeded in hoisting his large carcase on shore, and began to scale the mound with an alacrity he had never exhibited in any of his shooting excursions.

Cleaver saw at once that to attempt the gateway would be to make his party a butt for the enemy's shot, without affording them a chance of returning it successfully. Prompt to his purpose, he hastily cautioned Macauley to keep an eye to the gateway, and to guard the causeway, and calling to some of the men nearest to him, "This way, this way, my lads, follow me!" he led them in a slanting direction about thirty yards to the right, and brought them to a breach in the wall he remembered, through which they got into the court without opposition.

The smugglers having observed the success of this manœuvre, and seeing that they could no longer hold out their present post without a cer-

tainty of being surrounded, retreated with all haste towards the keep. But as they were flying across the court, they presented so fair a mark to the two parties entering by the gateway and the breach, that by a single discharge of their pieces four of them fell.

At this moment, and just as the two divisions of the assailants, had united, a female shriek was heard from one of the high loop-hole windows of the keep. The voice struck upon the soul of Lord Eaglesholme, who, in the midst of the attack, had his thoughts filled with the hope of recovering his niece.

"Oh Heavens!" he cried, "she is certainly here then!—on, my brave men!—on, and let us force the place!" And, saying this, he rushed forwards followed by the whole party, and pursued the flying enemy round to the other side of the building. They reached it just in time to see a small door-way, about eighteen or twenty feet from the ground, closed up, and to hear it barricaded against them.

Some of the most forward of the lads of the revenue instantly ran to the broken flight of steps, with the hope of forcing an entrance, but before

they had time to reach the first of them, two musket shots were fired from loop-holes on each side of the door, which unhappily took effect on one of the sailors so surely, that the poor fellow staggered back a pace or two, and fell with a deep groan, announcing his immediate dissolution. But Cleaver, undismayed, saw his opportunity, and cheered them on. "Up to it, my lads, before they have time to fire again!" and two of them were in an instant at the top of the steps, where, by being so close to the wall, they were out of all risk of being aimed at from the flanking loop-holes. Meanwhile, as the space permitted no more than two men to remain there at the same time, he took immediate precautions for the safety of the rest, by drawing them to right and left, and placing them so near the building, as to remove them also from all chance of being fired upon. The thick oaken door, studded with nails, had once been of immense strength, but was now so wasted by age and weather, that the two sailors, though unprovided with proper implements for the purpose, had some hopes of breaking through it by banging at it with the butt-ends of their muskets, and cutting out slices of it with their

cutlasses. They made but very little progress, however, by these means, notwithstanding the ardour with which they worked, and that they frequently relieved each other. Cleaver was becoming impatient, and Lord Eaglesholme still more so. They were even thinking of sending to procure sledge hammers, when a loud clamouring noise of voices was heard within, and a blaze of light began to appear through the chinks around the door.

Bill Handy, after having been so suddenly left alone, began immediately to think how he could rid himself of his bonds. He accordingly rolled himself gently off the heap of straw, and after a great many efforts, he at length managed to work himself towards the fire. The logs composing it having been pretty much burnt down, some of them had fallen aside. By wriggling his body, he was enabled to advance his hands towards one of the ignited fragments, lying furthest from the rest, and by stretching his arms as far asunder as the ropes would admit, and bringing one on each side of the flame, so as to allow it to play upon the cords without injury to himself, he gradually consumed them, and then burst them in twain.

This took a considerable time to effect, and was not accomplished until the smugglers had been driven within the building. But after his hands were set at liberty, the release of his legs became a very easy matter.

Reflecting that he was but one against many, and guessing how matters stood, from the voices, as well as from the report of the fire-arms within and without the keep, he thought it right to act with caution, and accordingly he stole quietly, in the dark, up the narrow stair, leading from the vaults to the low-roofed, and very confined passage within the doorway, with the intention, if he found the coast clear, to let in his friends. But in this scheme he was completely baulked; for he had no sooner put his head over the uppermost step into the passage, than the trampling of feet on the stone floor, and the jostling and squeezing he heard, convinced him that the greater number, if not the whole of the gang, afraid of the door being forced from without, had crowded themselves together into that narrow space, to endeavour to resist an entrance.

In this dilemma, an expedient occurred to his fertile brain, which he lost not a moment in carrying into effect. Bethinking himself of the spirit-

kegs heaped up below, he hastened down into the vault, and succeeded in carrying first one, and then two or three more in succession, to the top of the stairs. Then fumbling for Mr Brouster's cork-screw, he drew the bungs, and inverted the kegs, one after another, allowing the liquor to flow slowly out of them, till he had deluged the pavement of the place in brandy, up to the very door. He then ran down to the fire, and taking up a piece of live charcoal, which he smothered up in straw, he returned to the top of the stair, and opening the sluice of his last barrel, he set fire to the stream of brandy, by applying the live coal and the straw together, and then retreated into the great guard-room behind, to watch the result of his stratagem.

The effect was instantaneous. The villains finding themselves thus suddenly and unaccountably enveloped in flames, and standing ankle deep in a flood of liquid fire, coming they knew not whence, were terrified beyond all conception. Crowded as they were, their clothes caught fire, and, howling like demons with pain and terror, they endeavoured to escape, most of them down the narrow stair into the vault, tumbling over the empty barrels with horrid din, and choking

up the straight passage. The old door having caught fire, burned like tinder, and was now assailed with redoubled shocks from without. But the liquid stream of fire came rushing out from underneath it, so copiously, that, for some time, the assailants could hardly keep to their posts. Cheered, however, by the shouts of their friends, and still more by the voice of Handy from within, who, from the shelter he had gained, called out to them that they might safely approach the entrance without fear of the enemy, they crowded up against it. The door yielded to their redoubled efforts; and the flaming tide having by this time ebbed away, the whole party entered.

Lord Eaglesholme, whose impatience was excessive, had already rushed forward, in an agony of anxiety, to search for his niece. Shrieks were again heard in the vaulted room above. He rushed up the narrow winding stair, followed by Cleaver and Handy. Attracted by the voice, he entered a small confined doorway in the thick wall.—There was an instantaneous flash, and report of a pistol, and Lord Eaglesholme fell backwards, with a groan, upon Handy, who caught him in his arms.

Cleaver squeezed past between them and the wall, and boldly entered the doorway, when a second pistol was discharged from within, but fortunately without doing injury. By the faint light coming through the aperture of an opposite window, he discovered a man standing in a posture of defence, with a drawn sword in his hand. He stopped not to consider, but instantly flew at him with his sabre, and, after a desperate conflict in the dark, in which many blows were spent in vain, he at last succeeded in running his unknown opponent through the heart, with a well directed thrust, as he came between him and the window. The man fell headlong on the pavement. He listened for a minute, until the last shudder of departing life convinced him he had nothing further to dread from his opponent.

The shrieks in the farther corner of the apartment were frequent. Cleaver, addressing Miss Malcolm, begged of her to fear nothing, for that she was now perfectly safe, and he entreated her to compose herself, and remain where she was till lights could be procured. He then hastened to the stair, where he found Bill Handy employed

in conveying down the senseless body of Lord Eaglesholme.

Cleaver eagerly demanded how his Lordship was.

"He's gone, I fear," said Bill.

"Good God!" said Cleaver, approaching the spot on the landing-place below, to which Bill had brought him,—"he speaks not—he breathes not—I feel no pulsation.—Heaven protect us, what a melancholy catastrophe!—And how shall we break it to the poor young lady above?—For Heaven's sake, get lights, some of you, as fast as you can."

The light no sooner appeared, than a shocking spectacle presented itself. Lord Eaglesholme, covered with blood, and to all appearance already dead, was borne by two of the men into the apartment off the passage of entrance, and laid upon a sort of stone bench projecting from one of the walls. The fatal shot had taken effect in his head, which was dreadfully disfigured, his face being so covered with gore, that not a feature was to be seen. From the appearance of the wound, the ball must have entered the left temple, whence the blood still flowed, and a large tumor had arisen above and behind it. Not

a doubt remained that it had lodged in the brain.

Nothing could equal Cleaver's agitation and distress. He called loudly for water, which the alert Bill Handy ran off to fetch, and soon returned with a pitcher full. Cleaver immediately proceeded to wash away the blood; and, as he was occupied in bathing the wound, he remarked, with a faint expression of hope, that he thought his Lordship still breathed. He persisted with the cold application, and as he did so, Lord Eaglesholme fetched a deep sigh, and slowly opening his almost glazed eye, he looked languidly up in the face of the operator. Believing the wound to be so serious as he did, Cleaver naturally applied the wet handkerchief to it with great tenderness; but after he had got the blood thoroughly cleansed away from the spot, he looked narrowly into it for a moment, and suddenly relaxing the serious distress of his countenance, he jumped up, and began dancing about like a madman, waving the wet handkerchief round his head, and shouting out, —"Hurrah! he's alive!—alive and well!—'tis nothing but a scratch—a mere scratch—hurrah!"

Cleaver, though no surgeon, had seen wounds enough in his time, and the close inspection he had given that of Lord Eaglesholme, convinced him that the ball had not penetrated the skull, but that striking sideways upon the projecting bone immediately over the temple, and without entering much deeper than the skin, it had turned round beneath it, and lodged in the muscles above the ear, which accounted for the immense swelling that had at first produced so alarming an appearance. The important point now seemed to be to stop the bleeding. Bill Handy immediately thought of the smuggler's recipe, and again running down to the vault, he brought up a flask of brandy, and one handkerchief being steeped in it and applied to the wound, they used another to bind up his head. A few drops of the spirits were administered internally, and Lord Eaglesholme began to revive, and even to sit up.

The first words he uttered were in a faint and languid voice, and were incomprehensible to those about him. But after his eye had rested for a moment on Cleaver, who was still hanging over him with great anxiety, he seemed to make an effort to recall preceding events, and the work-

ing of his countenance showed that the recollection of them was gradually returning upon him.

"Where is she?" inquired he, with extreme eagerness—"where is Eliza Malcolm?—is she safe?"

"Make yourself easy, my Lord," said Cleaver, "she is safe, and in the apartment above—our chief solicitude has been about you!"

"Thank God!" exclaimed Lord Eaglesholme, clasping his hands, and looking energetically upwards—"thank God, she is safe! I beseech you, let my eyes be gladdened with the certainty of her preservation."

"My Lord," said Cleaver, "you may easily imagine that Miss Malcolm must be in great agitation and alarm; and your own faintness renders it, perhaps, necessary for your safety, that you should remain quiet for a little time. The emotions produced by such a meeting at present might even be fatal to you, and would certainly be highly injurious to both."

"Fatal to me!" said Lord Eaglesholme.—"What is my worthless existence?—to myself, certainly nothing—but to her—" added he, after a short pause—"aye, I would not willingly relinquish it, until I shall have done her justice

myself—until I shall see justice done her by others. I thank you, Captain Cleaver, for your kind consideration about me; but you cannot now afford me a more efficacious medicine, than the tender embrace of my dear child—my dear Eliza!"

"My Lord," said Cleaver, "Miss Malcolm, after all she has undergone, must require some little preparation for a meeting pregnant with strong emotions—I will go to her alone." And, taking a torch from one of the bystanders, he walked quietly up the winding-stair, leading to the place where he had left her.

Having peeped through the narrow passage in the wall opening into the vaulted chamber, the first object that presented itself under the flashing of the torch, was the dead body of the wretch, whose pistols had so nearly terminated both Lord Eaglesholme's life and his own. He lay stretched across the stone floor, his hand still clenching that sword, so lately wielded with furious courage against him,—the gaping wound in his side having poured out the whole tide of life. Crimes must have sat on his conscience, for the determined purpose of his soul, never to be taken

alive, was strongly expressed in his set teeth, and expanded lips, as well as in his strained eye-balls, still glaring as the light fell upon them. Cleaver, accustomed as he had been to scenes of death, could not contemplate the features of this ruffian, who had fallen by his hand, without a certain degree of horror. It immediately occurred to him, that if he felt the sight disagreeable, it must necessarily be still more revolting in the eyes of Miss Malcolm. He looked round, and observing a low doorway leading into a small vaulted chamber behind him, he hastily dragged the dead body thither, and deposited it out of view.

Having again returned, he raised his torch to permit the light to penetrate into the farther extremity of the apartment, when it discovered to him the lady seated, and half reclining within an arched recess in the farther wall, and with her head concealed in a part of her drapery. She was in the deepest distress. Not only were her sobs audible, but their short convulsive motions were visible through the mantle enveloping her form. Cleaver approached her with all the delicacy the circumstances demanded.

"Madam," said he, "I fear you have been

much alarmed by the conflict. But be comforted, I beseech you. Your enemies are defeated, and you are now amongst your friends. Suffer me to lead you from a place which must have so many horrors for you. Though I am a stranger to you, there is one below, in whom you are probably more interested than for any other human being."

He had no sooner pronounced these words, than the lady started up, and discovered her face and person. Cleaver was dazzled with the extreme beauty of both, even though her features were clouded by the grief, the terror, and the suffering she had undergone.

"Is he then below?" demanded she, with a sudden emotion of joy, "Oh let me see him!"—and so saying, she endeavoured to rush past him to the doorway.

"Stay, lady, stay your haste for a moment," said Cleaver, "he is below; but I must warn you before you see him, not to be alarmed, for he has received a trifling wound, of no serious consequence to be sure; but it wears, at first sight, rather an alarming appearance."

"A wound!" exclaimed she, in a fainter tone,

"Oh! let me to him!" and darting past Cleaver, she hurried down the stair with so much rapidity, that he, not always so active as when he climbed the mound during the attack, had some difficulty in following her, and had she not by accident turned at first into a wrong apartment, he must have allowed her to announce herself. Having, however, by this means gained the doorway of the chamber where Lord Eaglesholme was, in sufficient time to precede her.

"Miss Malcolm comes, my Lord!" said he almost out of breath.

Lord Eaglesholme's countenance betrayed extreme emotion.

"Where is he? Oh tell me where he is!" exclaimed the lady as she hastily entered, and stood with her fair hair streaming in disorder, eagerly surveying every face in succession, and vainly trying to discover the object of her thoughts.—"Oh! where is he?"

"Here is Lord Eaglesholme, Madam," said Cleaver.—"Pray stand back a little, Macauley, my good fellow, and permit Miss Malcolm to behold her uncle."

Lord Eagleshome's languid eyes, which had

received a temporary animation from the hope that gladdened them, darted through the intervening group, filled with all the tenderness with which they usually met those of his beloved niece. But they instantly recoiled from her who now appeared before him, and he betrayed symptoms of the most cruel disappointment.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed he, with extreme agitation, "where is Eliza Malcolm? can it be? can we have been deceived?"

"Is not this Miss Malcolm, my Lord?" inquired Cleaver, greatly surprised.

"Miss Malcolm!" repeated Lord Eaglesholme in a tone of bitter mortification. "But I beg your pardon, Captain Cleaver, you never saw her. But," said he with great keenness, as if still flattered by a lingering hope, "though you have been misled as to this person, she may still be confined somewhere within these walls. Let me go," said he, making an effort to rise, "I feel myself quite strong now—let me go to search for her myself."

But his strength was only in idea, for so great was his weakness, that he had nearly fainted from the unavailing exertion he made.

"I see," said he—"I see I have over-estimated my physical powers. But you, perhaps, Captain Cleaver———"

"My Lord," said Cleaver, interrupting him—"I will search every crevice within these walls—nay, every inch within the circuit of the moat, as if I were looking for a lost diamond: rest assured, that if the Castle of Moatmallard contains Miss Malcolm, I will find her."

So calling Handy to him, and one or two others with lights, he proceeded up the broken stair to the top of the building, and beginning there, he examined every part of it, story by story, regularly downwards, peeping even into impossible places, and rummaging every nook and cranny; then diving into the subterraneous vaults, he sought the whole of their labyrinth, nay, even the ruins surrounding the court-yard did not escape him; but all without effect.

With a heavy foot, that, even from a distance, sounded ominously in Lord Eaglesholme's ear, Cleaver returned to the apartment where he had left him.

"Alas! you need not speak," said his Lordship, surveying his countenance with a look of

despair; "I already see in your face that you have been unsuccessful. Good Heavens! what am I bound to suffer!"

"I am indeed sorry to say, my Lord, that Miss Malcolm has not been conveyed hither, or, if she was brought here at all, she must have been removed before we reached the place."

"But," added he, "let us inquire of this young woman what she knows. Pray, Ma'am, may I ask who you are? and how did you come into such odd company?"

The unfortunate girl, whose style of dress was too splendid and gaudy for the ordinary attire of a lady, and whose beauty would not have disgraced the highest birth, had not her manners, and broad Scotch accent, betrayed her to be of low origin, had retired into a dark corner, and having wrapt herself up in the folds of her mantle, had hitherto remained absorbed in a sorrow of her own, and giving way to her grief without restraint. On being thus addressed, she slowly raised her head, and with her eyes streaming, and her hair hanging loosely dishevelled over her bosom—

"Dinna ask me wha I am!—I was an honest

woman's honest bairn aince!—But noo," added she, after a pause, and shuddering as she spoke, "what am I? Oh, I canna bear the thought!"

With these words, she hurriedly buried her face in her lap. And then again lifting it after a pause—

"While he was wi' me and kind, while we rode the waves thegither in his bonny bark, my guilt was hidden beneath the silken fauld of the love I bore him. Even when his words fell sair upon my heart, they were his words, and though unkind, they were dearer to me than the saft breeze that blew us on our voyage. Oh, then, I thought na o' my faut! But noo that he's gane—noo that a' is gane—noo that I am left like the widowed moor-hen on the hill, thoughts will come ower me—sad and stinging thoughts. The cup o' joy was sweet; but 'twas a poisoned draught, and now its bitter dregs are workin' in my breast. Aince I sang lightly as the morning lark; but that was when I was as innocent as her. Noo!—Oh to think on what I am noo, is mair than this poor head can stand!"

She pressed her hands forcibly to her forehead, as if her brain were bursting, and again

sinking her head between her knees, she drew her mantle over it, and gave way to the violence of her emotions.

The whole party were affected by her grief, and desirous to know who she was. One of Captain Macauley's sailors came forward, and told them in an under voice, that although, from the change in her dress and appearance, he had not at first recognised her, he now knew her to be the daughter of Mrs M'Claver, who had left her mother's house, inveigled away, as was supposed, by Brandywyn the smuggler.

The object now demanding their most immediate attention was the care of Lord Eaglesholme. Cleaver fortunately thought of a boat, kept by an honest farmer, whose house stood on the margin of the lake, about a quarter of a mile off. He had often borrowed it for his duck-shooting expeditions. He instantly dispatched Handy to get it ready. With some of the materials of the bales in the vault below, and with a ladder they found there, he managed in a few minutes to construct a tolerably easy litter, on which his Lordship was carried to the boat. He saw him put carefully and easily into it, and pro-

perly defended from the night air, and he sent Handy and some of his own men to row him across the lake to Eaglesholme Castle.

On his return to Moatmallard, he found that Captain Macauley had been occupying himself and his people in collecting the bodies of the slain, so that they might be interred next day, and in taking an inventory of the captured goods. Two of the smugglers were found dead in the stair leading to the vaults, but the rest had effected their escape through the broken arch by the ladder, which had lain concealed among the bales, and was left standing applied to the aperture. The wounded seamen were conveyed to the farmer's. Captain Macauley's men, well armed, were then left to guard the booty for the night, and having made all these dispositions, Cleaver and his friend prepared to return to Sanderson Mains.

But before doing so, they bethought them of the unfortunate Eppy M'Claver. They returned with lights to the apartment where they had left her, but she was no longer there. They ran over the whole of the keep of the Castle, and its adjacent ruins, with a care nothing short of that

bestowed by Cleaver in his search for Miss Malcolm. But all without effect—she was gone—whither no one could conjecture. But as they left the place by the causeway, her straw-hat, floating on the black waters of the lake, gave rise to the most dreadful suspicions respecting her.

The two friends returned to Sanderson Mains, as day was beginning to peep. Their first care was to rouse Dr Partenclaw. They found him fast asleep, entombed in the feather-bed, his face covered by his night-cap, his nose only erected above the snow-white bed-clothes, its fiery red, glowing with more than ordinary splendour from his late potations of rum, presenting the whimsical appearance of a beet-root tower, garnishing a dish of whipt cream. They found some difficulty in awaking him. But he no sooner understood that his attendance was required at Eaglesholme, than he began to move with very unwonted alacrity; to put on his clothes, and to call for Hippocrates with great eagerness.

Cleaver found some refreshment, and a warm drink, abundantly necessary after the ducking and fatigue he had undergone.

CHAPTER VIII.

For it was annoyed greatly with robbers and outlaws, which troubled the whole state of the realm, every corner having a Robin Hood in it, that kept the woods, that spoiled all passengers and inhabitants.

SPENCER.

WE now return to Amherst, who, during the night, pregnant with so many busy adventures to his friends, had slept so profoundly on his bed of ferns, that he stirred not until the sun looked over the woods of the eastern hill, and glittered with broken rays through the foliage covering the mouth of the grotto. He started up, and found that the other sleepers, with the exception of O'Gollochar, were already on foot. Lochandhu was walking about under the trees with Macrory, occupied in the examination of the herd of cattle, whilst the rest of the party were busied in preparing a breakfast, from ingredients resembling those of the supper of the preceding evening.

"We must be expeditious to-day, Mr Oakenwold," said Lochandhu, after the first salutations of the morning; "we have a long tedious ride of it before us."

"I hope our poor horses have had something substantial then," said Amherst.

"I'll warrant they have not been starved," said Lochandhu; "but let us step this way, and we shall see how they are doing."

A few paces brought them to a projecting shelf of the rock, within the enclosure, where their horses, and six or seven ponies of humbler stature, rough as goats, and with long shaggy tails and manes, were tied to strong pegs driven firmly into the ground. As Lochandhu had hinted, there was no fear of their starving, for they were littered up to their noses in sheaves of corn, two-thirds of which had been destroyed by their feet in eating the other. O'Gollochar, who now appeared, proceeded to give them such grooming as the place afforded, whilst the gentlemen hastened to breakfast, which, like the supper, was begun and terminated by the potation of a queach full of brandy.

"You will be travelling soon, Macrory?" said

Lochandhu, as he and Amherst were taking leave of him.

"Och aye," replied he; "I'll be aff just after yoursell. But we'se tak it at laishur—we needna hurry the puir beasts noo—we're a' safe eneugh. If I'm at hame by the morn's mornin', it's the maist ye can expect o' me."

The horses being now saddled, they were led after the gentlemen up a steep path, from the stable, to the level ground on the top of the cliff, where they found themselves among the tall pines, on the very point of it. Though they now stood immediately over the grotto, not a vestige of any thing appeared that could indicate any such concealment below; nor would Amherst have believed, had he not known the fact, that there were so many armed men, and so large a herd of horned cattle so near him. The smoke rising from the fire, broken by its ascent through the foliage, presented more the appearance of one of those morning mists, so often seen hanging over woods, in low situations, than any thing originating from an artificial cause. Even the lowing of the cattle underwent so many reverberations, that it was difficult to fix on the place whence it originated.

The spot where they stood was very commanding, and nothing in nature could be more enchanting than the surrounding scenery; the morning sun was now hailing it with a smiling face, as if he rejoiced to revisit it; his beams lighted up the woods hanging on the surrounding heights with the richest hues. The horsemen staid not long to admire, but rode away at a smart trot, Hamish preceding them as before.

Amherst availed himself of the first opportunity to question Lochandhu about the persons and place they had just left.

"Macrory is a sort of a cattle-dealer," replied he, "a great attender of markets; and besides, as you might have gathered from his conversation, as well as from the liquor he entertained us with, he merchandizes a little in the smuggling way. He and his men have no objections to take a deer when he comes across them, or even to go in search of him when he does not choose to be so mannerly. As for the place, it is an old halting corner of his, where he often stops. I had some reason to guess he would be there last night, and thought it better to beat up his quarters,

than that we should travel all night to reach the public-house we are now going to."

There was something not quite satisfactory, and a good deal rather at variance with appearances, in this explanation, but Amherst was forced to content himself with it such as it was.

Their course lay for many miles up the banks of the larger river, sometimes running close to its margin through little dells of rich pasture, and at others along steep wooded precipices, or under the base of overhanging crags, or along their brow, where the smallest slip of a foot might have been fatal to both horse and rider. The grandeur, the beauty, and the endless diversity of the scenery of this wild stream, so bewitched Amherst's romantic imagination, that he almost forgot for a time the theme of his sorrows.

In this, however, he had soon sufficient leisure to indulge. For, winding away from the river, they climbed through woods of oak and birch, up the banks of a small tributary stream, in its rocks, its waterfalls, and its rapids, appearing like a miniature picture of the larger. As they continued to ascend, the birches grew thinner, until at last they entirely disappeared; and Amherst, in look-

ing before him, found that their horses' heads were directed up the gentle but rugged ascent of an apparently endless stretch of moorland, with hills rising here and there in lumpish and unshapely masses. Here, then, his thoughts were left undisturbed by external objects, save when occasionally interrupted by the sudden rising of a moorcock, as he started away with his covey behind him from among their horses' feet, and wheeled his flight to some knoll, where alighting, and carrying his red comb erect, he repeated his sonorous bell of defiance,—or by the conversation of his companion, which, however, chiefly passed unheeded by him, except when politeness made him give a reply, not always exactly to the purpose.

A lake of several miles in extent, bounded by high barren hills, sweeping down to its edge with bold outlines, but without a tree to cheer the eye, now opened at some distance to their left. The scene was loneliness itself. An islet near one side of it, entirely covered with the extensive ruins of a castle, tinged of a grey and orange mixture of colours from the lichens, time, and the humidity of the situation, had engendered on its walls, was the only feature suggesting the idea of

man, but rather bringing with it reflections adding to the surrounding dreariness. It was the haunt of myriads of gulls and other waterfowl, skimming in many a circling maze, and producing waving lines of transient silvery light, against those raw, cold, hazy clouds, half concealing the farther boundary of the sheet of water. It seemed as if man had been forced, by the inhospitable climate of this region, to relinquish his dominion to those inhabitants of the storm.

But after leaving this gloomy scene, and climbing for several miles towards a group of hills forming the ridge of that part of the country, the view of a range of grandly-shaped and very lofty mountains, their sides blue with the air of distance, and their summits clothed in a glazed covering of snow, broke upon them through a bold pass.

"Behold the Cairngorums!" said his companion; "we must be near those white-headed gentlemen before we sleep, Mr Oakenwold. Let us put on a little, if you please."

Amherst readily complied, and urging on Brisk, they rattled down the rocky path, wound over the knolls beyond it, and after a long and dreary ride,

descending through a dull moorland country, they reached a sod-built cottage, on the bank of a clear and rapid stream, running among rocks, and fringed here and there with a few alders and birches.

The ground plan of this curious erection presented a number of *outshots* and *to-fa's*, as such periodical additions are called in the language of Scotland. A broom from the top of one of the chimnies, was the sign that it was a place of entertainment, and here they halted to procure some refreshment for themselves and their horses.

Lochandhu was saluted by the landlord, a red-faced little man, in a coarse blue jacket and tartan kilt, who answered his inquiries without leaving the place where he was standing, with his back leaning against the wall of the house, and without withdrawing his hands from the otter-skin purse hanging from his middle, nor did he betray any sign of his profession, but even permitted the horses to be led off to the turf stable, without offering the smallest assistance.

"Can we have anything to eat, Mr Macphie?" said Lochandhu, nodding to him familiarly.

"Ou, nae doubt, nae doubt ye may that, Sir,"

replied he. "Stap your ways in—I'se warrant ye'll get some venison, an ye get naething else."

And without altering his position, except only in so far as to turn his face in the direction of the entrance, that he might be the better heard by those within, he, in a loud imperious tone, issued his orders in Gaelic. They were no sooner announced, than a woman, in a grey worsted short-gown, imperfectly concealing her bosom, and a dark-blue petticoat, so short as to exhibit to the knees a tolerably well-turned, but very dirty pair of limbs, bareheaded, and her black hair, that no comb seemed to have divided for many a day, hanging in matted locks over her face, appeared at the door. Leaning with one arm against the door-post, and giving her head a shake, so as in some degree to remove the natural veil from before her eyes, she displayed a very fine set of features, though partaking of the general dirt, every where begriming the rest of her person. On perceiving Amherst and Lochandhu, she stepped forth to one side, and laying her hands over one another in front, she dropped a low curtsey, and saluted them in Gaelic. Lochandhu replied to

her in the same language, as he stooped to enter the house followed by Amherst.

They groped their way through a long passage, having various doors branching off from it, into holes or dens, to right and left, all put in requisition during the fairs and markets, and not unfrequently on ordinary occasions; this place being situated at the union of two of those great military roads, constructed by Government, to facilitate the passage of troops through the solitudes of the Highlands. They entered a little chamber at the end of this passage, lighted by one solitary pane of glass, ingeniously inserted among the sods of the wall, and furnished with a wretched little fir-table, lame of a leg, and propped with a peat, and an old arm-chair, and two stools of similar materials. The place was so small, that there could have been room for no more. An odd sort of apartment this, thought Amherst, to eat venison in!

Lochandhu, with his usual attention to the ceremonies of life, insisted upon Amherst taking the arm-chair, as the place of honour, whilst he, with some difficulty, seated himself on one of the stools, with his back to the window, and thrust

his large jack-booted legs under the table, his formidable dress, and bulky figure, presenting a very whimsical appearance, sunk as it was upon the *creepy*, as he called it, with only his head and shoulders appearing above board.

Whilst they were waiting for the eatables, and talking about indifferent matters, Amherst perceived the light proceeding from the little window to be suddenly diminished, as if some object had approached it on the outside. He commanded a full view of it over Lochandhu's head, and involuntarily started, for, to his no small astonishment, he beheld the hideous face of the *Dwarfie Carline o' the Cove.* She gazed at him for some moments, with a fixed and freezing look. Lochandhu observed his emotion, and was in the act of turning round to discover what gave rise to it. The mysterious female seemed to guess his purpose. Her eyes assumed an extraordinary fire of intelligence, and putting her long bony fingers upon her skinny lips, she looked towards Lochandhu, and shooting a penetrating glance at Amherst, she instantaneously disappeared, long before his companion, hampered as he was, could effect his change of posture. See-

ing nothing at the window, he again turned towards Amherst, who, struck with the earnest manner of the signal, and judging it prudent to conceal the circumstance from his companion, had by this time clapped his hand to his head, as if attacked by some sudden pain.

"I hope there is nothing the matter with you, Mr Oakenwold?" said Lochandhu, with an air of alarm.

"Nothing very material," replied Amherst. "A sudden twinge of megrim, to which I am frequently subject."

"Emptiness of stomach, I daresay," replied Lochandhu; "you will be better after eating something;" and rising, with considerable exertion, he hastened to the door, and transmitted a long and deep-toned sentence of Gaelic along the dark funnel of the passage, that was immediately replied to from the other end of the sod edifice, by the shrill clamouring voice of the hostess.

"Aye, aye," said he, after listening to what she had said, and resuming his seat, "she'll be here directly."

Accordingly, in a few minutes she came trotting

along the passage, preceded by a savoury steam issuing from a large wooden dish she carried, and which half obscured her person as she entered. It was put upon the table, but it was as speedily removed, and placed on one of the stools, for something had been forgotten. She ran off, and returned with a towel, with which she covered the table. Then she went for knives and forks, and oaten-cakes, and salt,—all of which were to be sought for, before the chief part of the entertainment was restored to its proper situation.

"The venison" of which Mr Macphie had spoken, turned out to be a hare, cut down into fragments, and dressed with a very palatable sauce, made of the blood of the animal, seasoned with pepper and onions. During the meal, Amherst could not banish from his mind the strange spectre he had seen; and glancing more than once at the window, he almost expected to see the hideous face still occupying it.

Having finished their meal, Lochandhu called for the horses. Mrs Macphie waited at the door, dressed, in compliment to the gentlemen, in a high cap. Lochandhu anticipated Amherst, by paying her demands. The young

Englishman drew a heavy purse from his pocket, and gave her, as a *douceur*, enough to have paid three such bills, and her courtesy at once expressed her surprise and satisfaction. A Highlander, who was standing talking to Hamish, greedily eyed the golden treasure peeping through the meshes of the purse. The indolent landlord seemed to have remained in the same place and posture they had found him on their arrival. Nor did he move from the spot now, but bowing his back from the wall, with much dignity, he wished them a pleasant ride.

The travellers now crossed the river, by a narrow high arched bridge, and pursued their way for many miles through a deep forest of very large firs, sown by the hand of Nature herself, and exhibiting, in the bold bendings of their stems, and the wild luxuriance of their branches, all that freedom of growth in vain sought for in the formal modern plantations of the tree. Here they appeared like natives of the soil. The surface of the ground they grew on was varied with knolls and banks, and hills, and hollows, covered with the glossy leaves of the trailing arbutus,—and in the more open parts, the high tops of the

distant Cairngorums broke upon the view, the dark green masses of the foliage, being richly relieved against the pure white of their snowy summits.

About six or eight miles of travel brought them into the great Strath of the Spey, where are the districts of Rothiemurchus and Badenoch. The magnificent scale that nature now appeared in,—the breadth of the valley,—the noble stream by which it is watered,—the grandeur of the mountains bounding it,—the immensity of its natural forests,—the beauty of its numerous little lakes, every now and then bursting upon the eye, or seen glittering through the foliage, as they wound among the knolls of weeping birches,—the lovely form and rich green of some of those isolated hills, rising in the middle of the landscape,—the rocks hung with woods, together with a thousand more minute charms unfolding themselves at every turn, called forth Amherst's admiration, and filled his mind with sensations he had never before experienced.

The sun was on the eve of going down as they entered a birch wood, through which they urged on their horses, with as much speed as the nature

of the road, and the tired state of their animals would admit. Hamish, notwithstanding the length of the journey, trotted on before, with as much alacrity as he did the first minute they set out. Amherst expressed his surprise to Lochandhu.

"Why, the fellow has got his foot on his native soil now," replied he,—"his pace is mended by it, and I'll warrant he would run down a horse ere he would tire."

While they were yet speaking, a rustling was heard among the branches of the underwood, and a tall, athletic, and very handsome man in the Highland garb, sprang into the middle of the path. He was fully armed, with dirk and pistols in his belt, carried a long gun, and was followed by seven or eight men, dressed and accoutred in a similar, though somewhat inferior manner. One of these was the very man who had so earnestly eyed the young Englishman's purse at Macphie's. Amherst was startled by the sudden appearance of this formidable party, but he was relieved, by observing that Lochandhu considered them as friends.

"Well, Alexander," said he familiarly, addressing the apparent leader, "all going well, I

hope?" and then turning round towards Amherst, and addressing him in parenthesis, "a half brother of mine, Mr Oakenwold. After the roebucks, I see, Sandy."

The man, whose face wore an expression that gave Amherst no very favourable opinion of him, glanced a keen side-look at him from under his brows, and then began to talk to his brother in Gaelic, walking by his horse's side as he rode slowly on. Meanwhile, the others, after staring at the stranger, fell into the rear of the line of march, where they maintained a broken whispering conversation in the same language, occasionally stretching their heads forward to catch up the words falling from the two brothers. Amherst, as he rode so singularly attended, could not help comparing himself in his own mind to a prisoner of war, taken, under a strong guard, into the enemy's country. From the frequent sly and sinister looks he from time to time observed Alexander Macgillivray stealing over his shoulder at him, he was convinced that the brothers were talking about him, and though he did not understand their language, he could perceive from their manner towards each other, as well as

from the tone of their voices, that they were not agreed on the subject they were discussing. On the part of Alexander there were long, eager, and even violent expostulations, at least such Amherst judged them to be, by the gesticulations used to enforce them, whilst they were received, on the other hand, by Lochandhu, with great apparent coolness, and with a few short words, accompanied by a shrug, or a shake of the head, or a whirl of the arm, or, at most, by an energetic slap on his leathern cased thigh, all which, however, Amherst could easily interpret into decided, though temperate negation.

After accompanying them for a good mile or two, in this way, without the least cessation in their dialogue, Alexander Macgillivray sprang up a gravel bank that rose over the road, speaking all the while he mounted, and halting on the top of it, he, with outstretched hand, continued to address his brother, raising his voice, as Lochandhu, with his head half-turned round, walked his horse slowly on; and it was not until the laird was nearly beyond hearing, that he waved his attendants to follow him, and disappeared into the thickets.

"He is a violent fellow, Sandy," said Lochandhu, as Amherst joined him. "You must know, Mr Oakenwold, he is only my natural brother, though, in his presence, I chose to give him rather a more respectable appellation. He is not a bad fellow in the main; but, as I said before, hot and violent, as such merry-begottens are often apt to be. He is gone to look for deer with these lads. But for all I could say to him about the state of the wind, I couldn't get him advised to take the right cast, or the proper stand."

Amherst reflecting within himself that the rhetoric seemed to have been all exerted on the other side, and that the monosyllabic replies of Lochandhu but ill accorded with this account of their conversation, was as little satisfied with this voluntary explanation, as with that he had obtained from him about Macrory in the morning. But the train of thought it excited was speedily snapt, by his companion soon afterwards exclaiming—

"Mr Oakenwold, I may now almost venture to congratulate you on the safe termination of

your journey, for yonder twinkles a light in the house of Lochandhu."

Amherst was by no means sorry to hear this, for the night had already closed in.

"'Tis but an humble dwelling, compared to those you have been accustomed to in your own country, and even since you came to Scotland," continued he, after they had emerged from the deep bed of a brook. "But," added he, "it is fortunate that you won't think the worse of it after your last night's lodging. Such as it is, however, I trust that you will be at home in it, and that when you find things not comfortable, or not quite to your liking, you will for my sake believe, that for your sake they would be better, if the owner could afford it. But, stay, we are just almost at the door. You may dismount if you please, and Hamish will show your man to the stables with the horses, and afterwards to the kitchen-fire, where, I daresay by the time he has done up his beasts, he will be right glad of a snug corner. In the meanwhile, permit me to show your way." They now alighted on a piece of soft natural grass near the door, and Amherst followed Lochandhu into the house.

CHAPTER IX.

La vertù est si necessaire à nos cœurs, que quand on a une fois abandonné la veritable, on s'en fait une à sa mode, et l'on y tient plus fortement peut-être parcequ'elle est de notre choix.

J. J. Rousseau.

The charitable shades of night threw a veil over the more glaring defects of the mansion, and left it to the good natured imagination of the stranger to supply all deficiencies, yet it had no very flattering exterior. It seemed to consist of a plain and very low centre, hardly high enough for one story, but appearing, from its double row of small windows, to be divided into two. On each side was a lower wing, running out to the front at right angles, dedicated to a variety of domestic purposes.

Lochandhu lifted the latch. "Take care of your head, Mr Oakenwold," exclaimed he as Amherst was entering. But the caution came too

late, for, not having made due allowance for the lowness of the door, he struck himself a severe blow on the forehead, and at the same time slipped down an unseen step inwards, so that he staggered into the passage like a drunk man.

"Preserve me! if he binna bringin' hame some o' thae fu' fouk, to put the house a' in a steer!" exclaimed Mrs Macgillivray, a shrewd, acute, bustling little woman, who, in a dirty dark-printed gown, and a high cap, came hurrying from an adjacent room.

"Mrs Macgillivray," said Lochandhu, "pray, bring a light with you.—I am afraid, Mr Oakenwold, you have hurt yourself."

Amherst having assured him that he had suffered nothing, received his assistance in taking off his cloak, which was hung up on a deer's horn, amongst the numerous hats, plaids, bonnets, and sticks, covering the wooden partition.

When Mrs Macgillivray came with the light, Lochandhu formally introduced Amherst to her, as his most particular friend, and, above all, as the son of that gallant sea-officer to whom, as she had often heard him tell, he had owed the preservation of his life when abroad. He concluded

by saying, that he had prevailed upon Mr Oakenwold to honour his poor mansion with a visit, and he trusted she would assist him in doing all in his power to manifest to the son, how deeply sensible he was of the obligation he owed to the father.

"And, therefore, my good woman, to begin—will you set Mary to work immediately, to cook something hot for supper, and see that clean sheets are put upon the stranger's bed, and a fire in the room?"

Mrs Magillivray stared at her husband for an instant, but, making her obeisance to Amherst, and stammering out something about the happiness she felt in seeing him as their guest, all the while smoothing her gown, and pinning her handkerchief, and applying the points of her fingers to her head-dress, with a consciousness of the want of proper arrangement in her drapery, she sidled out of the room.

She had no sooner left them, than she was heard issuing hasty and pointed directions to a female servant. These were the death-warrant to a pair of unfortunate fowls, at that moment reposing in fancied security, with their heads under their

wings, on the uppermost perch of the poultry-house, in the midst of their feathered associates. The remorseless maiden stole upon them like Macbeth, to "murder sleep—the innocent sleep."

But she was by no means particular in the selection of her victims; for, climbing up to the place where the harmless society were reposing, she groped about, and seized upon the first brace she could lay her hands upon, and brought them struggling down, screeching in such a manner, that the slumbers of the whole flock were rudely broken, and a general fluttering and clamouring took place.

"Deil be in ye!" said she to one of those she had captured, "ye'll no do, for ye're the auld cock;" and, in her pet, she tossed the grandsire of this nation of pullets to the farther end of the place, and began a new attack upon them. But the garrison having been now alarmed, the second prisoner was by no means so easily taken, and before it was secured, the noise and cackling was so excessive, as almost to drown the conversation of the two gentlemen in the parlour.

Mary at last bore away two captives in triumph, and in a very few minutes they were split open, and lying like spread eagles broiling on the grid-

iron over the fire. Meanwhile Mrs Macgillivray was endeavouring, (to use her own words) "to mak hersell a wee decent," after which, she appeared as the prologue to the supper, dressed out in a silk gown, and in other respects equally magnificent.

The industrious Mary, who performed the parts of cook, footwoman, butler, and chambermaid, had no sooner prepared the supper, than, hastening to the dark hole of a garret she could call her own, she dressed herself, pretty much in the same at-random manner in which she had caught the fowls, and again hurrying down, she flew into the parlour, laid a fine linen cloth on the oaken table, and, with great celerity, spread out a parcel of broken horn-handled knives and forks, and a few plates, some of them chipped, and others cracked. Then, stumping away upon bare heels through the passage, she soon reappeared with the broiled fowls, and a smoking dish of fried ham and eggs, flanked by some oaten and bear meal cakes, and half a ewe-milk cheese, together with a bottle of brandy, and a large pewter jug of excellent claret. Amherst, though pressed by Lochandhu, was not inclined to drink, and after about an hour's conversa-

tion over a moderate potation of wine, to which they were left by Mrs Macgillivray, he expressed a wish to retire to rest.

A candle was accordingly called for, and Lochandhu preceding him up the wooden stair, ushered him into a bed-room, hardly more than large enough to contain a bed, so small, as to convince him at first sight, that he must double himself up in it. The roof of the chamber was so low, that he saw he could only be comfortable in it while sitting. There Lochandhu, after satisfying himself that his guest had bed-clothes enough, and that he wanted for nothing, left him and his servant together.

O'Gollochar's face very legibly expressed that he had something to communicate, but being occupied for some time with unpacking and arranging his master's things, some minutes elapsed before he opened the subject. At length, being able to hold no longer, he dropped on the bed the shirt he was unfolding, and, turning to Amherst,

" Och, dear Master," exclaimed he, " who do you think I saw yonder at the inn where we baited ?—faith, an' I need not say who, for the divil

a soul it was after all, unless it ware the divil himself, or one of his babes. But be that as it may, any how, may I never stir if it wasn't the same cratur or ghost we seen at the well, and in the Cove of Aiglesholme. I was all alone by myself in the stable, only Hamish, that's nobody at all, seeing he can't spake English, was lying snoring among the straw, in the dark stall at the farther end, when, as I was rising up, after examining Broadbottom's heels, who, by the bye, has got a plaguy cut under his fitlock amang some o' them stones, I happens to glance at an open hole in the wall, which would make a very good window in Ireland, and which, I see, often sarves the same purpose here, when, what does I see, but the horrid face of her girning thorough at me? Och, merciful Vargin! says I, and wid that down I swaps on my knees among the dung, when venturing to look up again, and seeing that the ugly face of her was gone, I makes bould to rise and look out at the door, but not a bone of her was there, either up or down, east or west."

Amherst thought it unnecessary to inform his servant that he also had seen this strange vision. He did what he could to laugh O'Gollochar out

of his superstitious fears by affecting to suppose it merely the accidental appearance of some poor old woman. But it would not do, for though he succeeded in silencing him, he saw that he had by no means shaken his belief that he had seen a supernatural being. He therefore changed the subject, by putting questions to him about the wound Broadbottom had received, which O'Gollochar assured him was so severe, as to have made him very lame for the latter part of the journey.

"If I had gotten a word of your honour afore you went into the house, I would have axed you to look at it yourself," said Cornelius.

Most young men are fond of pretending to a knowledge of farriery, and Amherst, partly from this cause, and partly to satisfy O'Gollochar, told him that he would willingly go out to examine the creature's limb even yet, if there was a light in the stable.

"Sure, Hamish is there, your honour, waiting to help me to supper them up, and he has got mire fir torches burning, enough to set the stable on fire."

Amherst, therefore, bade O'Gollochar show him

the way, and, in his slippers and dressing-gown as he was, he followed him gently down stairs, and across the court to the stable. After looking at the cut, and prescribing a bath of spirits and vinegar, he left O'Gollochar to take his own time and way of procuring the materials from Mary. Believing that Lochandhu and his Lady were already long since asleep, he lifted the latch and let himself in with the utmost silence. As he had his foot on the first step of the stair, however, he heard Lochandhu's voice issuing in a low tone from the parlour, and he was surprised to hear that of Mrs Macgillivray also, who, to all appearance, had retired to bed more than two hours before. That he might not disturb them he slipped silently up stairs to bed. But if the reader will listen at the door, he will hear what would have chained Amherst to the spot, had he caught but a few words of the conversation.

——" Do you think that he's asleep, wife?" said Lochandhu.

" Nae doubt but he is," replied she; " for it's mair nor a quarter o' an hour sin I heard his man's foot going to the stable, after seeing him till his bed."

" Well, then, to return to what I was saying,"

continued Lochandhu, " Sandy, I tell you, shall never persuade me.—Whatever I may have done, or whatever I may yet do, I will never play the traitor to this young man.—I have my honour as well as other people, though perhaps it may be of a particular and convenient kind."

" I'm glad to hear ye say sae, Lochandhu," said Mrs Macgillivray; " I've seen some awfu' sights sin I cam to thae hills.—Oh my very heart grows sick at the thought!—And, troth, when I saw the bonny young lad come hame wi' you, I kentna what to think.—You have ta'en a heavy weight aff me. But what, after a', garred ye ask him to Lochandhu? ye might hae guessed aforehand that Sandy wad bather yere vera life about him."

" Sandy is a perfect brute, wife," replied Lochandhu. " He already begins to be quite intolerable, and to presume beyond bearing upon his services. But I am resolved to hold him down. He shall never dictate to me. The fellow has more of the insatiable rapacity of the wolf about him, than the generosity of the lion. He cannot understand, that the pleasure of giving way to the common feelings of humanity, may sometimes

have a far greater relish, than the profit arising from acting contrary to them. I cannot describe to you what pleasure I felt when I first met this young man, and, above all, when I discovered that he was certainly the son of him who saved my life. The desire of having him under my roof, and of showing him what little kindness I could, was irresistible; and the satisfaction I experienced when he accepted my invitation, was such as I have not been blessed with for many a day. But Sandy is of so coarse a clay, that he cannot comprehend the luxury of indulging sentiments of this sort,—nay, he has not the slightest conception of their existence. When necessity drives, I have as little scruple as he has with the common herd of mankind. Then I am like the hunter who levels his rifle at the deer on the open mountain;—but who, that can call himself man, would strike down the tame stag that feeds from his hand? Then he cannot see, that even policy requires the occasional sacrifice of something, to the preservation of character. He does not consider, that the entertaining of a stranger thus, will silence all those suspicious floating reports, at least as far as they regard us, and will be the means of enabling us to pursue our

trade with double advantage, and with increased security, for many a day to come. But be easy, wife, regarding this young man; trust me I would sooner lose my own life than that a hair of his head should be harmed. This I have determined; and you know, that when my determination is once taken, nothing can shake it. As for Sandy, he is a savage dog. My indolence has made me allow him to take his own way; but you are well aware how easily I can muzzle him; and as for the rest, they are at my command."

"But are you sure," said Mrs Macgillivray, "that he has no suspicions?"

"Suspicions!—no!" replied Lochandhu—"How should he?—Methought, indeed, he liked not over much the appearance of Macrory and his lads. But I put it all off by talking of a market. By the bye, Macrory has made a fine haul of Windlestraw's cattle; they will be on our hill to-morrow morning, and the fellow shall have a handsome share, for the clever way in which he has managed it. Better thriven beasts never were seen.—Suspicions!"—added he, after a long pause—"If he were to have suspicions indeed—self-preservation might—But no, it's impossible. He never can

have suspicions here. What can he see, or what can he hear, that should excite the smallest spark of suspicion? You know the proverb, 'A wise fox keeps his own hole clean.' Have not some of the best gentlemen of Scotland been my guests at times? And do I not visit in all the houses of note in the country? Who has a fairer character than the Laird of Lochandhu? Pshaw! trust me it shall never be the worse for this young man's visit. But, come," said he rising, "we'll talk more of this anon. Meanwhile, let's to bed, for I am somewhat tired."

In the middle of the night Amherst was awakened from a deep sleep, he knew not very well how, and starting up, he beheld, seated squat on the edge of the bed—the *Dwarfie Carline!!!*—The light of the moon shone powerfully upon her—the fore-finger of her right hand was at her lips commanding silence, and she waved it behind her towards the door, to indicate that the least noise would alarm the house, and cause her immediate disappearance.

"Speak!—what are you, mysterious being?—What would you with me?" said Amherst, in an under tone.

"No light matter makes me have converse

with mortal man!" said she, in a low murmuring, but distinct and solemn voice. "Thy vows are plighted to Eliza Malcolm—forget them not—they are already registered in Heaven!" and as she said so, she raised her hand slowly upwards.

Amherst uttered not a word, but remained with his eyes intently fixed on hers. She then pulled two long hairs from her head, and twisting them together in an instant, she hastily tied one end of them round his finger, whilst she held by the other.

"These two hairs," said she, "are as one—one cannot be broken without the other being snapt; so is your fate twined with that of Eliza Malcolm.—For her sake, you are at present the object of my care—deserve it then! This abode is not without danger. Yet be prudent and fear not!—But, mark!" said she, with a terrible frown—"happen what will—leave not these mountains till you again see me.—Remember!—your happiness is in my hands!—disobey my injunctions, and you are lost for ever!—Remember!" added she again, with an increased earnestness of manner, as pointing and raising the fore-fingers of both hands, she brought them quickly down, with

an action calculated to enforce her mysterious warning. Then, without assistance from her arms, she sprang backwards from off the bed, nearly to the door, yet so lightly as hardly to be heard. From the position in which Amherst lay, he could not see the door. He jumped from the bed to examine it—it was shut—the figure was gone, and he heard not a sound.

Some minutes had elapsed before Amherst could convince himself that he was not dreaming. He felt the pressure of the hairs, which still remained tied round his finger, and he became convinced of the reality of what had taken place. He knew not what to think of so extraordinary a visitation; had she not made use of the talismanic name of Eliza Malcolm, it is probable he might have treated her solemn injunctions with very little respect; but, as it was, he dwelt upon them with a serious determination to obey them. To explain their object, however, he found somewhat difficult. Why should she command his stay in a part of the country so far from her he loved? unless indeed it might be to give time for the removal of Lord Eaglesholme's mysterious objections, by circumstances of which she was

aware, though he was ignorant of them. If this was her object, then it was probable that she saw hope of their removal, and to this hope he clung. There was something so preternaturally overpowering in her appearance, words, and manner, that he was disposed to believe she not only possessed extraordinary means of information, but that she had substantial grounds for the advice she gave. There was something almost miraculous in her visit. The place where he had last seen her was twenty miles off. She had talked of the house of Lochandhu not being free from danger, yet she, though manifestly unwilling to be seen by its master, had fearlessly entered it,—how he knew not, more than he could guess whither she had gone.

Amherst lay perplexed with these conjectures for several hours; indeed, the moon had gone down, and the grey twilight of morning was beginning to appear, ere he again closed his eyes. When he did so, his dreams were haunted by the figure, now more minutely imprinted upon his recollection from being so long placed near his eyes.

When Amherst arose in the morning, he was so charmed by the beauty of the pastoral scenery,

on which he looked from his window, that he forgot for a moment the events of the preceding night in the ecstasy it awakened.

The back of the house stood but a few feet removed from the brink of a wooded bank, sweeping forwards from under it to right and left, and enclosing a lovely low meadow within its bosom. Beyond this appeared a portion of a very considerable lake, into which the great river of the valley expanded itself. At the distance of about a mile from the eye, the opposite shores presented every variety of knoll and hillock, rising one behind the other, and wooded with birches, hazles, and dwarf oaks. Over these some high mountains appeared, whilst, more to the left, the still loftier group of the Cairngorums rose in all their majesty.

The sun was dancing cheerily over the lake, and gilding its surrounding woods and pastures with gladness, and a large herd of cattle were feeding on the meadow. Every thing contributed to awaken ideas of rural purity and innocence in his mind; and notwithstanding the caution he had received from his midnight visitor, he could hardly persuade himself that any thing like danger, or treachery, was to be apprehended from the

inhabitants of so soft a scene. From such thoughts he was speedily recalled by observing a number of men examining the cattle. Amongst these he descried Lochandhu, his natural brother Alexander, and Macrory. It was some little time before he was quite certain of his host, who having now relinquished the thraldom of the Lowland dress he had formerly worn, was clad in the more accommodating costume of the mountains.

After moving the animals about, and looking at them individually, the men began to drive them off in a long line, towards an opening in the wooded bank, where they disappeared, expressing, by frequent lowings, their unwillingness to leave the pasture. Lochandhu continued to walk backwards and forwards with his two companions for some time, as if in earnest conversation. Alexander Macgillivray and Macrory then followed the party who went with the cattle, and Lochandhu reurned towards the house.

Amherst was received in the parlour by both his host and hostess, with every appearance of the kindest welcome. But the Carline's warning crossed his mind. He took care, however, to make a suitable return to their compliments and civilities. During breakfast, Lochandhu ran over to Am-

herst the various kinds of manly amusements the country afforded, leaving him to choose which he should first pursue.

"Shall we to the hill, Mr Oakenwold, to kill a few grouse and black game,—or would you like to look nearer at home for a roebuck, where you may also get plenty of hares?—Or perhaps you would prefer salmon-fishing?—Or if you are fond of boating, you may shoot wild ducks upon the lake, and catch abundance of pike and trout. For ptarmigan or white hares, we must seek the highest tops of the mountains—as for red deer, we must have time to prepare for showing you a royal day with them."

Amherst, like most young men, was extremely fond of such pursuits. This ample list of the animals of sport, made him forget the dubious situation he had placed himself in, by becoming an inhabitant of the house of Lochandhu. Remembering that he must wait the promised communication from his mysterious nocturnal visitant, he was rejoiced to find that he could do so without any risk of *tædium*. He felt the necessity of occupying himself, to keep down those distressing thoughts, resulting from his conversation

with Lord Eagleshome. He resolved, therefore, to partake of all these amusements in succession.

A good many days soon passed away, in making war upon the various creatures we have mentioned, Lochandhu generally acting as his guide and companion. His success was far beyond what he had ever before entertained any idea of. But much as he enjoyed such amusement, his pleasure was by no means confined to the mere trifling exultation arising from the extent of the murder committed, in which every sportsman has more or less felt the inclination of indulging himself. He had other and more exalted sources of delight from such excursions. As his foot trod lightly over the heathy hills in pursuit of his game,—as he inhaled the healthful breeze,—and as his eye roamed unconfined over the endless extent of brown moorland, where not a trace was to be seen of those pitiful barriers, raised by the sordid hand of all-grasping man, jealous of the intrusion of his fellow upon a few wretched feet of the surface of this earth,—he felt his soul expand with a freedom he had never before experienced. Nature seemed to be the only proprietor here, and her domain was without limits.

Such sentiments as these, more particularly suggested themselves to Amherst, during his expeditions to the Cairngorums, whither he went, nominally, indeed, in pursuit of ptarmigan and white hares, but, in reality, more for the purpose of enjoying the solemn scenery of the endless forest of pines, covering the stretch of country at their base, and of the wild lakes and glens in their hollows, as well as the boundless prospects to be had from their different summits. Amidst the enthusiasm of that rapture, excited in his ardent bosom by the contemplation of Nature, on a scale of savage grandeur he had never before an opportunity of beholding, he almost forgot what others would have considered as the chief object.

Often would he stop to give full scope to the pleasure he felt. Now, in the very depth of the forest, would he lean his back against the trunk of one of those gigantic fir-trees, of which there were many twenty or thirty feet in circumference, and looking out from beneath its bold free growing arms, and thick foliage, catch a view of some white summit, and watch the various effects produced by the light mists and clouds sweeping along its brow, like the fitful transitions of hu-

man emotions. Again, stretched upon a heathy bank, or moss-grown cairn, he would lie silently surveying the long drawn vista of one of those lonely woodless lakes, there so frequent;—its clear surface giving back the image of those overhanging cliffs, of height only accessible to the eagle, which sent down their foaming waterfalls, fed by the almost eternal beds of hardened snow hanging on their brow. Or lastly, rejoicing in those exhilarating feelings naturally arising from the occupation of a lofty and commanding position, he would throw his eyes from the ridge of the mountains, over the subjacent country, his field of vision reaching almost from sea to sea; and remarking how utterly all appearance of man and of his works was lost upon the face of the vast map below, he would think on the absolute insignificance of the creature, and on the vast—the immeasurable greatness,—the infinite power,—the eternity of the Creator!

It was after frequent instances of success in roe-shooting, that Lochandhu at length proposed to Amherst to try the nobler game.

"You have been well enough bled with the roebucks, Mr Oakenwold," said Lochandhu to

him, one evening, as his guest returned from the woods; "we must now endeavour to flesh you with the deer. With your leave, we shall go to-morrow evening on an expedition against them."

Amherst readily agreed to Lochandhu's proposal, and every thing was arranged accordingly.

CHAPTER X.

To drive the deer with hound and horn,
Earl Percy took his way.

Chevy Chase.

But, see, his face is black, and full of blood;
His eye-balls further out than when he lived,
Staring full ghostly, like a strangled man:
His hair upreared, his nostrils stretched,
His hands abroad, displayed, as one that grasped with struggling,
And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued.

SHAKESPEARE.

Hark! I hear the sound of coaches!
The hour of attack approaches!
To your arms, brave boys, and load!

Beggars' Opera.

ON the ensuing day, Amherst and his host set out on horseback, accompanied by O'Gollochar, and attended by several Highlanders on foot. They forded the river, and crossed the valley, and a little before night-fall they entered the

mouth of one of those glens, bringing down tributary streams, from that great mountain range, lying between the districts of Badenoch and Blair. The hills on both sides rose with steep acclivities, covered in most places with a forest of magnificent pines, but occasionally exhibiting precipitous rocks, or bare shattered stony fronts, where all vegetation was destroyed by the continual fall of loose materials. The path along which they rode was one of those slippery tracks, so common in mountainous countries, and every now and then, the aid of the stout attendants on foot became necessary, to prevent the horses from sliding down among the loose debris. They forded numerous torrents, roaring over the cliffs in cataracts, and appearing like sheeted spectres, when seen amidst the obscurity of night, that deepened the blackness of the yawning ravines down which they poured.

At length, after many hours hazardous riding, they reached a small bothy, or hovel of sod, erected by the hunters. Here a fire was soon kindled, for plenty of dry bog-fir was found ready heaped up. The custom is, that whoever avails himself of the shelter of such a place, is bound

to replace the fuel he may consume, by an equal quantity fresh gathered.

About one-third of the small area was occupied by a recently constructed heather-bed. This was ingeniously formed, by placing the new-plucked heather perpendicularly, and pressing the whole together laterally towards the walls of the bothy, so as to make a compact body, and then keeping it so, by confining it within a low sod fence, laid across the floor from one wall to the other, thus producing a couch, possessing the utmost firmness and elasticity. Here, after a hasty supper, Amherst and Lochandhu threw themselves down together to sleep, wrapped up, the one in his cloak, and the other in his plaid. O'Gollochar disposed of himself near the fire, and the rest were contented with the open air, and the shelter afforded by the lee-side of the bothy. The repose of those in the interior was short but sound. They were roused by their attendants long before the grey dawn, and after a hasty refreshment, the party proceeded up the glen on foot, the way being no further practicable for horses.

A walk of nearly two hours brought them

through a pass between two beetling crags, that frowned over against each other, into an amphitheatre, embosomed in the mountains, rising from either side of the stream with green sloping acclivities. A few large detached blocks of granite contributed to narrow the passage. Lochandhu told Amherst that they were here to take their stand; and they accordingly halted, and began to prepare for the sport. A number of guns were loaded and placed within reach of the gentlemen, and several large wire-haired greyhounds were put in leash, to be ready to slip at the deer if necessary.

They had not remained at their post above half an hour, when Lochandhu called to the party to keep close, and bidding Amherst look to the hills, he saw the deer bounding down their sloping sides in numerous small detachments. Distant shouts were then heard, intermingled at intervals with the deep notes of several slow-hounds, and the shrill yelp of the rough Highland terriers. Confused sounds came from all directions, and the animals were seen pouring from various quarters into the glen.

The deer seemed to run together, rather as if compelled by the confined nature of the place

they were driven into, than from any inclination to intermix their various groups, for the leading harts showed a disposition to warfare, and butted violently at each other when they met. Though the motions of the vast congregated herd were tumultuous like those of swelling waters, they hardly as yet advanced towards the pass, but kept fluctuating about as if uncertain to what point they should direct their flight.

But now the shouts, and the yelling of the dogs became more and more audible, and, anon, a number of Highlanders, who had been gradually advancing in a circle, began to show themselves on the verge of the surrounding hills. Their clamours now became so incessant, as to unite into one continued volume of sound; and on a signal being given, they began to run down the steep sides of the hill, towards the army of deer below. At once the panic seized them, and they rushed down the glen towards the pass. Lochandhu cautioned Amherst to be ready with his arms, and to be particularly careful to shelter himself behind the stone where he was posted.

The dense body came thundering on, with such impetuosity, that many of the animals were jostled over into the stream. The sportsmen

stood in a state of anxious preparation. No sooner had the herd come within shot, than they gave fire, and two of the fattest bucks fell. The Highlanders who were with them immediately shouted, and then showed themselves from behind the rocks. Confounded by the shots, and by this sudden noise, the whole body of deer halted suddenly in mid career, and two more shots were fired at them by each of the sportsmen, in rapid succession, and with unerring aim. The whole herd turned round in extreme alarm. Some of them were thrown down by the shocks they received by rushing against each other, in the confusion that ensued; and some of them, dashing through the river, darted off individually in different directions, bounding up the slopes of the hills, each attempting to force a passage for itself as it best could.

Now the scene became animated beyond conception. Amherst and Lochandhu ran forward as they were making off, and began to use the remainder of their loaded fire-arms, promptly supplied to them by the men who were with them. One was killed in the act of crossing the water, and was pulled out by a sturdy Highlander, who caught it just as the stream was carrying it away.

Another was wounded as he was climbing the opposite bank, and was soon taken by the large greyhounds which were slipped at him. A third was shot taking to the hills close to where they were. But a noble hart of superb head, who was apparently the father of the herd, gave rise to an incident that excited much greater interest than any thing that occurred. He had hitherto escaped by some good fortune, and had retrograded with his head down, and his horns prepared for battle, covering the retreat of his more timorous progeny from the assaults of the terriers, now rushing after them from the ambuscade. Before either of the sportsmen were reloaded, he darted off to a narrow point of rock, jutting out and overhanging the river, with the intention of leaping into it, not aware that the immense height of the precipice rendered his purpose impracticable, and before he could return to make his way in another direction, the dogs had barred the passage, and he was brought to bay.

Several of the yelping curs had already suffered from the fury of his defence, when one of the Highlanders gallantly ran forward, and, with his dirk unsheathed, made an attempt to get round him, with the intention of dispatching him. The

animal kept his eye upon him, and, turning round, made a furious bound at him. The spectators thought he was gone. But the lad had the good sense and coolness to throw himself, very adroitly, at full length flat upon the ground, before the creature could reach him. The stag stood over him, occupied in defending himself from the dogs, but every now and then attempting to gore the man.

Amherst ran to his assistance, hastily chose a position whence he could shoot without the risk of injuring the prostrate Highlander, and calling to him to be still, fired. The ball hit the hart right between the horns, and the distance being short, it penetrated to the brain. He sprang high into the air, and fell with a tremendous plunge into the pool far below. A shout of applause followed, and some of the men ran down a bank to intercept the floating body. The poor fellow, whose rashness had so nearly proved fatal to him, came up to Amherst, and, embracing his knees, broke forth in a torrent of thankful acknowledgments, which, however, being in Gaelic, would have been lost upon his preserver, had not his eyes and his expressive actions alone been sufficiently intelligible.

And now the shots from the Highlanders, scattered on the sides of the hills, burst on the ear like the independent firing of riflemen, awakening a thousand echoes; and several deer were brought down, as they attempted to pass between the men. The clamour of the people and of the dogs was excessive and continued, until the last of the animals was seen scouring over the brow of the mountain.

A large fire was now kindled near the huge stones where Amherst and Lochandhu had first stationed themselves;—the Highlanders came in from all quarters, and the dead game was collected. The deer were quickly paunched, and one of them was selected for immediate use. With this the stoutest youths began to make trials of their strength, vying with each other who should most adroitly and expeditiously wrench out the animal's joints. The cooking was equally speedy and inartificial. The flesh was cut up into steaks, broiled upon the fire, and greedily swallowed by the hungry fellows around, in the black and smoking state in which it came from the embers,—and then washed down with large potations of aquavitæ.

Amongst those who appeared, when the whole party assembled, was Alexander Macgillivray, with whom Amherst had not met since the night of his arrival at Lochandhu. He was accompanied by the same attendants who formed his party upon that occasion. Amherst and he coldly recognised each other, by distant salutation. The rest of the Highlanders were young men, who, at Lochandhu's request, had very willingly come to assist him in the sport. To these he behaved liberally in the division of the spoil.

Lochandhu, with his usual politeness, addressed Amherst, expressing a hope that he had been pleased with the sport of the day. Amherst declared himself highly gratified; but at the same time added, that he should have more pleasure in shooting a single deer by his own individual exertions, than in the murder they had committed by thus surrounding the whole herd, and slaying them like sheep; and he signified his intention of making such an attempt before leaving the country.

The legs of the deer being tied together with twisted birch-twigs, and hoisted on poles, each carried by two men, the whole party returned down the glen. When they reached the bothy

where their horses had been left, and while some of the attendants were in the act of putting the saddles upon them, Amherst was surprised by some one pulling his skirt. He looked round, and perceived the Highlander whose life he had saved, standing behind him. There were others near; and the man seemed to wish to communicate some private information. He spoke some words of Gaelic in an under tone; and whilst he did so, he looked timidly about him, as if afraid of being observed. Amherst's face showed him that he had not been understood. The Highlander looked unhappy. His features betrayed extreme anxiety; and thinking that he was not perceived by any one near him, he whispered Amherst again in broken English,—

"Tak him care o' hersel'; tak him care o' yon man!" and as he said so, he threw a side look towards Alexander Macgillivray, turning his thumb in the direction where he stood, and then instantly moved away.

Amherst was a good deal surprised with this caution. He had taken an unaccountable dislike to Lochandhu's natural brother, from the first moment he beheld him; and now that he look-

ed at him again, he thought he perceived a certain low cunning, and a cast of villany in his down-looking and unsteady eye, which assured him, if there was any reality in the danger his monitress had warned him of, it must be from this very man that it was to be apprehended. At all events, he resolved to be on his guard against him.

The horses being ready, the party proceeded on their route homewards. Amherst remarked, that during the greater part of the way, Alexander Macgillivray, who was on foot, slunk sullenly along in the rear, whispering from time to time with one of his own people,—a man who had the appearance, and partly the dress of a Lowlander, and who was of very unprepossessing physiognomy. Lochandhu himself rode in the van, talking loudly and merrily to the Highlanders around him, with whom he seemed to be very popular.

When they had reached the valley of the Spey, the men broke gradually off in different directions; and the party diminished, till Lochandhu and his brother, and their attendants, were all that remained. Alexander Macgillivray now came up

to his brother's saddle-bow, and continued to walk with his hand on the pummel, maintaining an earnest conversation with him in Gaelic. Amherst watched them with some anxiety; but as well as he could guess from the expression of their countenances, the natural brother seemed to be giving Lochandhu some information to which the other listened with great attention; and from all he saw, he had no reason to believe that he formed any part of the subject of their conversation.

Some time before they reached the house of Lochandhu, Alexander Macgillivray and his party left them. The young Highlander who had spoken to Amherst at the bothy moved off along with them, but, catching his eye as he was going, he reminded him by a significant look of the caution he had given him.

Lochandhu having now initiated Amherst into all the mysteries of Highland hunting, left him more frequently to seek his own amusement. This was a source of great satisfaction to him, as he was glad to be left to the private indulgence of those sad but interesting thoughts, he neither had the power nor the will to banish from his mind. Soon satiated with the murder he committed on the in-

nocent inhabitants of the woods, the waters, and the mountains, he now followed the various sports they yielded rather as an apology for being alone, than from any pleasure he derived from such slaughter. The wild, romantic, and solitary scenes he wandered in, afforded him so much delight, that, expert as he now was in threading their mazes, he would often dispense even with the attendance of O'Gollochar, that he might indulge undisturbed in the enjoyment of those reveries they originated.

In this manner he sauntered down one evening to the lake, where he had been taught to expect a shot at a flock of wild swans. As he lay concealed by some bushes growing on the margin, near the lower end of it, he perceived something floating towards the sandy beach. It was already almost dusk, and for some time he paid little regard to it, having supposed it to be a log of wood. As the natural swell of the water, that set towards him, brought it nearer, he was surprised to see a human head. For some minutes he was led to believe that it was a man swimming for pleasure, and floating on his back, his face being upwards. But it advanced, and a wave soon threw the lifeless body endwise against

the sand, where it rested, with the lower extremities still in the water.

Amherst went towards it—but what was his horror when, upon closer inspection, he recognized the features, though much disfigured, of the young Highlander whose life he had saved a few days before, and who had afterwards taken occasion to give him the mysterious warning to beware of Alexander Macgillivray?

His body bore too evidently the marks of a violent death, to leave him a moment in doubt that he had been murdered. He seemed not to have yielded to his fate without a struggle. The eyes were open, and the teeth set together, and great part of his dress was rent off, the sleeve being entirely gone from the right arm. The marks of several severe blows appeared on the head, chest, and arms. One finger of the left hand was nearly separated, as if by some sharp instrument, and both hands were firmly clenched, and contained portions of long red hair, as if torn from the head of some one with whom the murdered man had been in desperate conflict; and the wrist of the right arm was deeply marked above and below, apparently by the teeth of his opponent. The neck

showed the blackened traces of strangulation, as it were by the gripe of a strong hand, and a stab in the region of the heart, like that of a dirk, seemed to have completed the dreadful work.

Amherst was so shocked by this unexpected sight, and particularly after recognizing the person, that he stood for some moments unable to act. It instantly occurred to him that the young man must have been observed, and suspected, at the time he conveyed the warning to him, and that it was upon his account he had died; and the sad spectacle he now beheld, seemed to present a type of the fate that hung over himself. So strongly was he affected by this posthumous warning of the unfortunate young man, that he looked unconsciously around him, in expectation of seeing the murderers about to rush upon him. Recollecting himself, however, he dragged the corpse beyond the water-mark, and laying it on a bank where it was hid by the bushes, he hied him homewards.

As he was approaching the house, he met Lochandhu, accompanied by his brother, and followed by one or two men, hurrying away as if on some urgent expedition. They were so engaged

in conversation, that they did not observe him till they were just upon him.

"When did his coach arrive, Sandy?" he heard Lochandhu ask as they approached.

"Two or three hours ago," replied the other. "They will soon be all quiet; for Ewan heard them say they were to be off early in the morning; and the coach was left at the door with the trunks and luggage strapped on, just as it came in. But hush! there's somebody coming."

Amherst felt great repugnance to communicate his discovery of the murdered body to Lochandhu in presence of his brother. Begging of him, therefore, to return with him towards the house, he related to him in private, and in a few words, what he had seen, betraying the utmost horror as he did so. Lochandhu was moved during his narration, and eyed him with a scrutinizing look, as if endeavouring to read what impression had been made upon him by the circumstance. Then, after Amherst had finished speaking:—

"Aye," said he, with a shrug, "poor fellow! —some drunken scuffle, I have no doubt.—He was given to quarrelling. But these things, though now becoming more rare than they were, are still

pretty frequent in the Highlands. I must send to have his body taken care of."

"But will you not also take immediate measures to discover the perpetrators of the horrid deed?"

"Oh, aye, surely, surely," replied Lochandhu in a careless tone, "I will write to-morrow to the procurator-fiscal, whose business it is to take up such matters. But there is little chance of any thing being made out;—and it is very likely, if the truth were known, poor Kennedy was as much to blame as those who did it."

"Good God, Sir!" exclaimed Amherst, "surely whatever the provocation may have been, you do not mean to say that any thing can excuse murder?"

Lochandhu threw a side glance at him as he spoke, and, dropping his eyes on the ground, said slowly, after the pause of a moment: "No, God forbid I should, Mr Oakenwold! I only meant to say, that the poor fellow has probably brought his death upon himself by some intemperance of his own. For there are many hot spirits among these mountains, with whom there is seldom more than a word and a blow, and then out with the

whinger.—But step you into the house; I am going a little way with Sandy about a small matter of business, and I will see into this affair. In the meanwhile, good evening to you." And with these words, and his usual bow, he left him.

Amherst entered the house with no very favourable impression of the good feelings of his host. He found Mrs Macgillivray in the parlour, who immediately asked him to sit down with her to supper, saying that, as her husband's business would probably detain him until a late hour, they should not wait for him. The lady seemed to have some weighty matter hanging upon her mind. Anxiety was in her face. She could not rest a moment upon her chair; but fidgetted continually about, and gave various indirect hints of the lateness of the hour, until Amherst, seeing that she wished him to go to bed, pretended weariness, and taking his candle, retired to his chamber.

The unpleasant occurrence at the lake, and the broken conversation he had heard pass between the brothers, so employed his thoughts, that he in vain tried to sleep. Tired with restlessness, he arose, towards midnight, to look out of the win-

dow. The moon was in full splendour, so that the smallest object was discernible in the meadow below. He could even see two hares frisking about, and feeding on the dewy grass; and he remained at the window for some time, amused by watching their gambols. Suddenly they stopped, with their ears erected in a listening attitude, and in an instant both scoured off to cover.

Amherst was curious to know the cause of their alarm, and he had not long to wait for an explanation of it; for, immediately afterwards, a party of men appeared straggling out from the wood, and began to cross the meadow diagonally, towards the path leading up to the house. They carried three or four large and heavy trunks, and when they came sufficiently near, he saw that it was Lochandhu, his brother, and the rest. He withdrew from the window, lest his figure might be noticed.

He had not lain long, when he heard the latch of the house-door gently opened. He rose quietly, and looked through the key-hole of his chamber-door, that afforded a view directly down the wooden stair upon the entrance. The outer-door was opened, and, by the moonlight that came in, he

saw the whole band enter, bearing the trunks, which they carried into the parlour.

There was a great deal of whispering below, and Mrs Macgillivray, dressed as he had left her, crossed the passage with a candle in her hand. As she passed, she held it down to examine one of the trunks, left standing on end against the wall near the door, and Amherst distinctly saw the letters S. H. M, formed with brass nails, upon its lid. She entered the parlour after the men.

Amherst then heard a noise as if the trunks were frequently lifted up and put down again, and as if attempts were making to force them open. After the lapse of half an hour, two men came out for the trunk in the passage, carried it in, and the sounds that followed, indicated the opening and examination of it also. Mrs Macgillivray now passed across, and again returned, dragging after her a large basket, and having some empty sacks hanging over her left arm. In a short time the parlour-door opened, and men passed across, bearing the sacks filled, and these were immediately afterwards followed by Lochandhu and Mrs Macgillivray, who, with some

difficulty, carried between them the large basket, now loaded with shirts, handkerchiefs, shawls, and wearing-apparel of various descriptions. The men who had taken in the sacks now came out, and the others issued from the parlour with the trunks, that, from the ease with which they were carried, were evidently empty. The whole party then disappeared by the outer-door, which they gently shut after them, and every thing was again silent.

Amherst stood for some moments astonished with what he had witnessed, and then returned to bed. From all the circumstances, there could now hardly be a doubt that the party had been engaged in the plunder of some travellers of note. Had he then lived so long as the guest of a professed robber?—Good heavens! Well might the Carline say that the house of Lochandhu was not without danger! and well might the unfortunate Kennedy warn him against Alexander Macgillivray! He was almost resolved to leave the house next morning, but he recollected that he had talked of a shooting excursion next day, as well as of several other successive plans, and that he could not possibly find an apology for so sud-

den and complete an alteration of his intentions, without exciting suspicions that might be fatal to him.

Then he recalled the command of the mysterious female, not to leave the Highlands until he should again see her. But so long a time had elapsed since she visited him, that he had nearly begun to despair of her fulfilling her promise. He remembered how she had employed Miss Malcolm's beloved name as a spell to ensure his obedience to her will. But might she not have used it for a nefarious purpose? Her cautions, now verified by circumstances, forbade him to give such an interpretation to her words.

He was much perplexed by these reflections; but the result of them was, that however unpleasant he now felt his residence at Lochandhu, from the disagreeable idea of submitting to receive the hospitality of an undoubted robber, as well as from motives of personal apprehension, he determined to postpone his departure at least for a day or two.

CHAPTER XI.

———This house is but a butchery;
Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it.

SHAKESPEARE.

He rose in the morning rather before the usual breakfast hour, to fulfil his declared intention of grouse-shooting, and descended to the parlour, where he found Mrs Macgillivray. Her eyes and her fingers were busily employed about some work, and before she observed him, he had time accidentally to notice that she was beginning to unpick the letters marked on a shirt, and these he distinctly saw were S. H. M. She no sooner perceived him, than she started up in manifest confusion, and sweeping together the shirts, and India handkerchiefs that were lying on the table beside her, huddled them all into her apron, and exclaiming, "Eh, Maister Oakenwold, my gude-

man's sarks are nae seams for the parlour when ye are there!" she scuttled out of the room.

If any part of the circumstantial proof had been wanting, this woman's employment was sufficient to convince him of the justice of his suspicions. He resolved, however, to appear perfectly unconscious of them, at least for the present.

When the Lady returned, therefore, he threw out some indifferent remarks about the weather, and then carelessly mentioned his intention of shooting. Mrs Macgillivray called to Mary to get breakfast, saying to Amherst that her husband had gone early that morning on business, and adding, "As ye're gaun to the muirs, Mr Oakenwold, I'se warrant ye'll be glad to get away betimes, so we'll no wait for him."

Amherst had a successful day's sport, and having largely loaded O'Gollochar's game-bag, they were both returning homewards towards evening, when he happened to observe an eagle soaring aloft. As he eyed it, he saw it swoop suddenly down upon something lying at the base of a range of high cliffs, about half a mile from the path they were pursuing. As it did not rise again, he thought he had now a chance of getting a shot at

the king of birds, which he had very frequently in vain attempted before.

Having drawn his small shot, and put ball into his gun, he sent O'Gollochar home with his burden, and began to make a wide circuit, concealing himself by such banks and hollows as lay in his way. But notwithstanding all his care, the wily bird disappointed him, by rising long before he could come within proper distance, and mounting with broad and vigorous wing to the summit of the cliff, it settled there, and sat as if looking down upon him in derision, and bidding him defiance. Very much baulked, he approached the object the animal had pounced upon, and found that it was a sheep that appeared to have recently fallen from the cliff.

Seeing that he had not the smallest chance of reaching the monarch of the skies, even with ball, whilst he occupied his present lofty throne, he hastily turned his steps in the direction O'Gollochar had taken. But long before he had got into what was to him *terra cognita*, the night fell so dark that he mistook his road. He was not at first aware of this, however, and having gained a great extent of wood, where he thought he was well

acquainted with the way, he entered it confidently, but soon found himself embarrassed, and became convinced, when too late, that he had taken a wrong direction.

After wandering for a long time through trackless thickets, he was at last gladdened by the appearance of a light that glimmered through the foliage, and he scrambled towards it with the hope of finding some one who could put him on his way.

On his nearer approach, he found that the light proceeded from the interior of a hovel formed of sods, on a foundation of dry stones. It stood not far from the edge of a bank overhanging a deep ravine, through which a stream held its course. The door was more than half a-jar, and he listened for voices from within, but all was silent. He advanced and knocked, but his appeal was unattended to; he repeated his signal, and, as he still had no answer, he ventured to enter.

A wood-fire was burning on the earthen-floor, as if somebody had been recently there; but seeing no one within, he was about to leave the place, with the idea that, by following the course of the stream, he would soon arrive at the great

valley, to which it must be a tributary, when an object caught his eye that immediately arrested his attention. This was no other than the very travelling trunk he had so particularly remarked the night before, with the letters S. H. M. in brass nails upon its lid; and among a variety of other strange things scattered up and down, he descried three other trunks, of different sizes, all of them with the same letters.

Very disagreeable ideas now crowded upon his imagination, and sensible how dangerous his situation was, he was about to make a hasty retreat, when, as he moved away, a bright object glanced upon his eye from amongst some branches of brushwood, lying over the rafters at the farther end of the hut. As he looked with more attention, he thought it resembled a silver button. The brushwood seemed to be pressed down just in that particular spot, as if from a superincumbent weight, and he was seized with an irresistible desire to ascertain what was there. He lifted up a small fragment of lighted fir, and proceeded to satisfy himself. His eyes rested upon a ghastly human face, which being turned downwards, stared at him from among the withered branches.

He started involuntarily, and put his hand to his gun, believing it was some one with whom he should have to contend; but it moved not, and he discovered, with the utmost horror, that the eyes, though wide open, were fixed in death.

Availing himself of a large chest standing underneath, he mounted, and raised his head and shoulders through between the rafters, and, holding up his light, he discovered the dead body of an officer in full regimentals. He put his hand on the corpse, and felt that it was still so warm as to indicate the murder to have been very recent.

He had hardly time to give it a cursory examination, when he was alarmed by the sound of numerous voices, and the noise of feet running towards the hut. All chance of retreating unperceived was cut off. What was to be done? To be discovered in his present situation would ensure his murder, as his single fowling-piece could have been but of small avail against many armed men. There was nothing for it but immediate concealment. He had not a moment to deliberate. The gang were almost at the door. He extinguished his torch, and, drawing himself and

his gun hastily up between the rafters, he laid himself at length by the dead body on the birch boughs.

He had hardly crept out of sight, before a party of seven or eight Highlanders came hastily into the hovel, vociferating in Gaelic, and exhibiting every appearance of having made a precipitate retreat into their concealment. They were all armed, most of them with long guns, and all with broad-swords, dirks, and pistols, and at their head was Alexander Macgillivray. From the spot where he lay, he commanded a sufficiently distinct view of the scene below, through the interstices of the dry birch boughs, which sufficiently concealed him. The men hastily shut and barred the door behind them, as if apprehensive of pursuit, and, drawing around the fire, they continued their clamorous talk in Gaelic.

"Winna ye no gie ower wi' yere damned Erse, and let a body ken what ye're saying?" cried one of them, whom Amherst immediately recognized as the person, with whom Alexander Macgillivray had held so much close converse in his way down the glen, when returning from the deer hunt, and whose dress, as we before remarked, par-

took of both the Highland and Lowland costume, and whose grey coat, and old hat covered with meal dust, and his red ferret eyes, that seemed almost burnt out by his long vigils over the hopper, now satisfied Amherst as to what was his ostensible profession. "Will ye no gie ower wi' yere Erse, wi' a devil till ye?"

"Hoot aye, John Forbes," said a savage-looking fellow, with long tangled red hair, and who had been speaking when he interrupted him; "hoot aye, man; I was only makin' an observe till Maister Alexander, that the fellow's horse had served him weel, or he wadna hae won awa' sae easy, sorrow gae wi' him!"

"Troth, Willy Davison," replied Forbes, "ye might hae made a better shot. An' mair na that, gin ye had na stappit in afore me, just as I was gawin to let drive at him, I wad hae turned him heels uppermost aff the beast, afore he wan a hunder yairds. Ye saw hoo I coupit the offisher chield about an hour before. Fient a word he ever spak' mair."

"You did that job very neatly, miller," said Alexander Macgillivray; "but since you speak of him, let us examine his waulees, for our watch

called us off so suddenly to this less fortunate adventure, that we had not time to ascertain the profits of the first. Ewan Maclauchan," said he to another man, " reach over behind that trunk, and pull out the red-coat's saddle-bags. These *Sidaran Dearag* seldom carry much of the king's gold in their bags, however much they may wear on their backs. But should this fellow turn out to be the paymaster man, who came from the south with money for the garrison at Inverness, his luggage may be a prize worth all the trouble we have had to-night."

A pair of small saddle-bags was now handed into the circle, and Alexander Macgillivray, taking them upon his knee, began to attempt to undo them.

" There's a padlock there," said the miller, rising from the ground ; " stay a bitty, till I gang and ripe the chield's pouch, till I see whether I can find ye the key."

Amherst, now anticipating an immediate discovery, prepared to make desperate resistance, and to sell his life as dearly as he could. But he was fortunately relieved for the time, by Macgillivray calling out to the miller, " No, no, John ;

sit down, man—a Highlander laughs at a lock upon leather." And unsheathing his dirk, he ripped up the valise from end to end.

The contents were now exhibited, and along with two or three shirts, a pair or two of stockings, some handkerchiefs, a soap-box, a pocket-glass, combs, razors, blacking-ball and brushes, &c. there was found a chamois leather-bag, containing coins, which Alexander Macgillivray emptied into the lap of his kilt, in such a manner as to enable himself to form a general judgment of the amount, without permitting the others to be equally wise. Amherst, from his position aloft, had an opportunity of observing that there were a number of gold and silver pieces, but he could not possibly guess at the amount, for all the heads in the group were instantly thrust forward to reckon them, and so concealed the heap from his view, without getting any satisfaction themselves, for Alexander Macgillivray still managed very cleverly to veil them.

"This is not so bad," said he, "though, after all, it can hardly be the fellow I suspected. Let me see now—there's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten—— !—ten yellow boys !—

then as to silver. But hold!" said he, shovelling them again into the bag,—"We'll count them all over, and share the booty in the morning.—John Forbes, you shall have a double portion, as a reward for your good shot; meanwhile, I'll put them in here," rising and opening a chest on which he had been sitting; "and now let us have something to eat and drink. Donald Robertson, see what you can get us out of the pantry, man!"

In obedience to his command, one of the gang got up, and, much to Amherst's uneasiness, came towards the end of the hut over which he was lying, and lifted the lid of the large wooden chest, and going and returning once or twice, took from it some cold provisions, some bottles of spirits, and other articles for their meal. As he passed under the spot where the young Englishman was concealed, he observed a pool of blood on the clay floor, which had dropped from the death-wound made by the miller's ball in the breast of the unfortunate officer.

"Och, hoch! hoo she bluids!" cried he.

"Never mind that, Duncan!" said the reckless miller, with a hardened laugh, "it's the

blude o' the bottle, man, that we hae to do wi' ye noo,—sae come awa' wi't!"

The gang now began to eat, and to carouse it heartily, quaffing down large draughts of ardent spirits at intervals. The chief speakers were Alexander Macgillivray and Forbes the miller, who seemed to be a sort of lieutenant amongst them.

"Weel, after a' noo," said the miller, "that devil o' a hellicate drover wad hae been worth twa o' this lobster-coated fallow, had we but felled him. I'se warrant his bags were furnished in anither sort o' manner, after a' thae south kintry marcats?"

"It's a thousand pities we missed him, John," replied Alexander Macgillivray. "But what is worst of all, I fear he may tell some tales, that won't be much to the advantage of our trade."

"Troth we have muckle need to do things cannily," rejoined the miller,—"the mair, sin' we see that the Laird is sae resolved to protect that English loon that's staying wi' him the noo, down yonder at the house o' Lochandhu. An I had the sortin o' him,—my faith, I wad whittle his craig for him as soon as gif he ware ane of my ain grice."

"My brother Edward is too much of a gentleman for us," said Alexander,—"his imprudence is absolutely astonishing to me. If he didn't mean to permit us to make our own of the youth, who, from what Angus saw at Macphie's, has something about him well worth our while, at least it was madness to bring him to Badenoch to be a spy upon our actions.—I have argued and argued with him till I am tired about this Saxon. I have endeavoured to persuade him of the truth of what I myself believe, that he was the man who defended Lord Eaglesholme, and assisted him in killing the two brave fellows who beset him on the cliffs,—but all in vain. It won't do,—we must not suffer Edward's folly to hang us as well as himself. We must serve this fellow as we served Kennedy, and that soon too. The accident of his finding the corpse of that traitor has made a strong impression on him, by Lochandhu's account. We know not all he may have learned from the villain when he was alive, and we must not give his suspicions time to operate. I should have proposed to way-lay him last night when he went to the loch, or this afternoon as he returned from the moors, where I under-

stand he went this morning, had not the job of these trunks, and these affairs to-night, given us enough to do. But to-morrow night the deed must be attempted, even if it should be in the house of Lochandhu itself; and we must even trust to our after endeavours for pacifying Edward, and overcoming those ridiculous notions of 'the rights of hospitality,' and 'the hereditary claims of gratitude,' about which he is always rhyming."

"Can ye no shake the Laird's determination anent him, by raising suspicions of his having discovered some o' his secrets?" demanded the miller; "that might, maybe, be a way o' throwin' cauld water upon his scruples."

"I thought I did succeed in some degree last night, after he told me of the lad's discovery of the corpse of that rascal Kennedy," replied Macgillivray. "Edward was very angry at first, that we should have taken such summary vengeance upon the false knave at our own hands, without consulting him. But when I told him the cause, and described to him what we had observed to pass between them that day of the deer-hunt, I thought he seemed to wince and fidgit a

little, as if he thought that every thing was not as it should be; and he harped, two or three times, on the unlucky accident of the Englishman having found the body.—I'll see what I can make of him to-morrow.—If I can work on him to give his consent to the thing, so much the better; but if that cock won't fight, then we must do this job at our own hand as we did the other, and take our chance of satisfying him after it is all over. You know that, though somewhat obstinate in sticking to his opinions beforehand, he is easily appeased, when he sees that a thing is put past all chance of mending."

The strong potations they were swallowing had been for some time operating on the heads of the rest of the gang, who, little interested in what was passing between the persons of the preceding dialogue, had been talking away among themselves in Gaelic. Their Celtic conversation became so loud by this time, that the greater part of what subsequently fell from Alexander Macgillivray and the miller was drowned in their vociferations. Amherst, however, still gathered enough to satisfy him, that he continued to form the subject of their talk.

"His sport at the loch was stopped last night, and he will be for trying it again," said Macgillivray.

"It wad be a noble chance," said the miller, after something additional that fell from the other, but which was lost in the noise.

"It would," said Alexander Macgillivray; "or what think you of his expedition to Glenmore? Edward was telling me, that he has been raving about that place ever since he happened to come through it, in his way back from the Cairngorum. The lad is resolved to go there to spend a day or two by himself in watching the deer; and if we could only learn when he is to follow out this whim, we might make sure of him there, without risk and without noise, and Lochandhu need never be the wiser. But, as I said before, there is no time to be lost; we must take the first fair chance that offers. Could not you manage to sift the Irishman to-morrow morning? He seems to be a simple sort of chap. Could we but hear from him of his master's intentions, we might lay some certain plan, and carry it into immediate effect."

"Aye, faith, might we," replied the miller;

"and gif he should tak' it into his wise pow to gang till Glenmore, we might easily foregather wi' him there; and, then, diel ha'e me, gin I get a grup o' his craig, but the fient a out o't he shall come. By my troth, it wad be ony thing but canny, to let that chield slip awa' to the laigh kintra wi' siccan notions in his head, as that senseless coof Kennedy crammed intil him. But d'ye think the Laird 'ill be here the night noo?"

"No," said Alexander Macgillivray, "he had some business to settle with Macrory."

This latter part of their conversation had gradually become more audible, from the rest of the gang dropping asleep, overcome by their draughts of whisky. Even Alexander Macgillivray and the miller, neither of whom had drank so deeply, now began to look wiser as they addressed each other.

"I say, John," said Macgillivray, winking at the sleepers, "these fellows must be kept small to-morrow. This gold is too good for them. A piece each will be enough, and more than they deserve—we'll make silver serve the rascals—eh!"

"He! he! he!—and gude eneugh for them,

the knaves," said the miller. "I saw what you were after, Maister Alexander. By my faith, it seemed to be a bonny bag.—I doot gin the tallow-headed drover himsel' had a better. But ye manna forget me!"

"Forget you, my dear fellow," said Macgillivray, shaking the miller by the hand, "no, that I won't, you shall share like a prince; but hush—let's to our straw—for we must be astir early." Then lowering his voice to a whisper, which, however, Amherst easily caught in the silence that now reigned,—"We'll send them to bury the carcase, whilst you and I are taking our first share of the spoil—you understand me? and then when the grand division comes, we'll behave with great show of generosity to the rogues."

Their heads were brought closer together as he spoke. A wicked and triumphant smile, called up by the consciousness of his own superior cunning, played on his countenance; and the miller's red eyes glared through the unvarying hue of his mealy features, as he grinned with a hellish sympathetic delight.

"Was't no a gude shot, after a', Maister Macgillivray?" said he.—"Od I've a mind to gang

and see hoo the red loon's lookin'," said the wretch, taking up a fire-brand;—and scrambling to his feet, he began to stagger towards that end of the hovel over which Amherst was lying. "Fich! fich! what o' bluid the chield has had in his inside! Ane o' my grumphies could na had mair," said he, as he stepped into it, and almost slipped down from the lubricity it occasioned on the clay-floor. Then steadying himself a little, he held up the blazing light to the rafters. "Aye, aye," continued he, with a fiend-like laugh, as he surveyed the dead man's visage, looking down upon him with all the grim expression produced by a violent death,—"ye may girn at me, he! he! he!—my bonny braw buck!—But faith ye're just as weil there as trotting on yonder till Inverness. I wad na care gin we had the ither Englisher lad on the same baulk wi' ye."

"Come away, man, John," exclaimed Alexander Macgillivray, somewhat impatiently; "you'll set fire to the birch-bushes if you don't take care. Come away to your straw.—Remember what we have to settle in the morning."

"Od, an' that's very true," said the other.—"Weel, guid night till ye Captain," added he,

nodding to the dead man. "I'se warrant I needna wush ye to sleep sound."

So saying, he staggered away, much to Amherst's relief, who, by the strength of the light, had seen his red eyes staring up within a few inches of his own; and who had felt the very heat of his breath, poisoned as it was with the stench of the spirits he had been swallowing, and who, every moment dreading he must certainly be discovered by him, had more than once been on the eve of springing down in desperation, and attempting to fight his way to the door.

Having thrown his torch into the fire, the miller retired into a corner, and dropped himself down, quite overcome; and before Alexander Macgillivray had raked the embers together, he was snoring as audibly as any of the other sleepers.

The villain looked around him to see that all of them were certainly sound; and then hastily taking a key from his pocket, he opened the chest, into which he had put the money-bag, and taking it out, he picked a number of the gold pieces from it, and putting them into an old stocking, he secreted them in his otter-skin purse; then

locking up the bag again in the chest, he wrapped himself in his plaid, and lay quietly down beside the miller, where he soon composed himself to sleep.

CHAPTER XII.

> O ! whither shall I run, or which way fly
> The sight of this so horrid spectacle ?
>
> MILTON.

AMHERST had watched Alexander Macgillivray's motions with considerable anxiety, being now rather impatient for an opportunity of slipping down from his irksome and hazardous concealment, and attempting his escape. But even were he certain that the villain was asleep, he saw, with great uneasiness, that it would be almost impossible to approach the door, far less to open it, without disturbing those of the gang, whose bodies lay like the spokes of a wheel round the decaying fire, and over several of whom he must step before he could get near to it.

Believing that their leader was undoubtedly slumbering, he surveyed them with much attention, studying how he could best pass over them. Two or three several times he had moved silent-

ly from his place, and was almost in the act of putting down one toe on the lid of the large chest, when an accidental motion of some of the sleepers, such as the laboured stretching of an arm, or a leg, when they dreamt of their waking deeds, or perhaps the turning of a head to an easier position, would disconcert his purpose. Being so often disappointed, he was almost resolved to risk the desperate chance, and was arming himself with the resolution necessary for the unequal combat that must have followed his attempt, when, to his astonishment, the door was suddenly forced in, and thrown down upon the sleepers, by a large stone driven with such fury against it, that it scattered the very embers of the fire about the floor.

In the aperture, a little figure appeared for an instant, shrouded in a large fleece of green moss, torn from the ample surface of some rock or bank. It screamed in a shrill voice: "Let the dead watch their time, and come down and flee!"—and then instantly disappeared.

The whole gang, roused by the crash, were upon their legs in a moment; but being so suddenly awakened from a profound sleep, they arose con-

fused and ignorant of what occasioned the alarm; and the clamour in Gaelic and English was so loud, that not a word could be heard. All inquired, and none could explain.

As they were standing debating, another large stone came bang against the sods forming the back wall of the building; and the shock was followed by a wild unearthly laugh.

"Damnation!" exclaimed Alexander Macgillivray. "What are ye all standing and chattering at as if it were a ghost? There's somebody playing tricks upon us; let's out after them!" And seizing a claymore, he sprang to the door, followed by the miller and the whole gang.

Amherst heard them crashing through the bushes behind the hut, as if in pursuit of some one in that direction. His first thought was to make an immediate effort to escape; but having observed from their looks, that most of the gang believed there was something really supernatural in this assault, and arguing from thence, that they would probably not venture very far beyond the light that glimmered from the door-way, he readily interpreted the friendly hint that had been given him, and lifting the dead body of the

officer, he stripped off the bloody coat, and quickly put it over his own. He then seized his fowling piece, and dropped himself to the floor, and concealing his face as well as he could with his cap, he stalked forth from the door.

His conjectures as to the men's fears had not been groundless. They had followed their more hardy leaders no farther than to the outside of the hut, where, had he appeared undisguised, he would have been most certainly intercepted and seized by them. But, no sooner did they behold what they took to be the reanimated body of the murdered officer, walking in the stream of light that issued from the door, with the blood pouring as it were from the fatal wound in his breast, than the whole superstitious group, believing that the devil had taken possession of the corpse, uttered yells of terror, and ran off amongst those very bushes their fears had formerly hindered them from venturing to penetrate.

Amherst seeing the way clear before him, pressed forward, but, in the confusion of the moment, he took the direction up the glen, leading to the mountains. He had not gone three steps, when he heard the voice of the miller, who was

by this time returning with Macgillivray from a fruitless chase, and was within less than twenty yards.

"Damn it! there's a man rinnin' awa'!—this way, Maister Macgillivray!—after him!—this way!—up the water!"

Amherst urged forwards. The obscure moonlight fell partially among the trees; the shades of night being deepened to blackness in particular parts, by the thickness of the foliage above, so that, though the mere figure might occasionally be perceptible, it was more frequently lost altogether. Amherst flew,—and as he did so, he heard the quick steps, and the shouts and execrations of his pursuers, at no great distance behind him. He rushed desperately onwards along the precipices, and in passing by a steep projecting bank, where the pendant bushes made it so dark that he could only guess at his way, his foot slipped through some decayed soil projecting from the edge of a rock overhanging the hollow bed of the brook, and he tumbled headlong through the boughs of the trees below, twenty or thirty feet, down to the very bottom.

Fortunately for Amherst, he dropped upon a

dry heap of pure soft sand, loosely laid up by some recent flood. This lucky circumstance, and that of his fall having been broken by the intervening twigs, saved him from being killed. As it was, he escaped with a few unimportant bruises. He lay, however, stupified for a moment, but was soon brought to his recollection, by hearing the loud curses and exclamations of his pursuers, who, ignorant of what had happened, still scrambled along in his supposed track, from which he had much reason to be thankful he had been so suddenly and safely removed.

He lay as still as death for a considerable time, until he heard their distant voices faintly repeated by the echoes far up the glen. He then recovered his legs, and stripping off his borrowed coat, he threw it away, and groped for his fowling-piece, that had fallen as softly as he had done, and was uninjured. With much circumspection he began to feel his way down the cavernous bed of the brook, creeping in the dark with as little noise as possible, under the projecting rocks, and banks, and bushes, and occasionally wading through the shallow water, support-

ing his slippery steps with a broken bough he accidentally picked up.

Having advanced so far as to think himself beyond hearing of the banditti, he moved with more freedom, and, consequently, with greater expedition, until at length, much to his satisfaction, the shade became less profound, and he discovered that he was emerging upon the great road by which he had approached the house of Lochandhu, the night of his arrival there.

He sat down, for a little time, on a large stone by the side of the way, to recover his breath, and to offer up ejaculations for his almost miraculous deliverance from certain murder. What was now to be done, or how was he to proceed? Must he return to the house, after having such dreadful proofs that Lochandhu was the protector, if not the head, of a gang of robbers and murderers? Yet how was he to procure the means of immediate flight, without giving alarm to the wavering mind of Lochandhu? He could not leave his house that night so secretly that his departure would not be discovered by the gang, who, by short cuts known only to themselves, could easily intercept, waylay, and murder him.

Trusting, therefore, to that protection, which the conversation of the villains had led him to believe Lochandhu still felt disposed to afford him, he resolved to continue his guest for this night at least.

But after having thus determined on his more immediate line of conduct, he began to consider what his after plans should be. He remembered the keen desire expressed both by Alexander Macgillivray and the blood-thirsty miller, that they might prevail on Lochandhu to permit them to make away with him; and notwithstanding that he considered himself tolerably assured of present safety under the roof of his host, he felt convinced, that the atrocious villain Alexander, would continue to use every means that fraud or deceit might enable him to wield, to work upon their leader, to persuade him to abandon him; and he could hardly doubt, that they would eventually succeed, and that, perhaps, very soon. It therefore became prudent to terminate his visit at Lochandhu as speedily, and in as natural a manner as possible; but he could not very well decide how to do this without awakening suspicion.

Rising from the stone on which he had sat for some time, he was walking leisurely up the ascent, when something started suddenly forth from beneath the shadow of the underwood, on the dark side of the road, a few paces before him. He involuntarily cocked and presented his gun. The figure threw its arms abroad, and he instantly took down the piece from his shoulder, and uncocked it, for he beheld the *Dwarfie Carline* standing in the middle of the path.

She advanced to him with a quick step, and taking him by the arm, "Amherst Oakenwold!" said she, in a more subdued tone of voice than she had ever before used, "I have waited long for you here, but 'tis well I have met you."

"Waited for me!" said he, with surprise, "how could you have looked for meeting me here?"

"Hush!" said she, motioning with her hand, "ask no questions—time presses, and I have much to say. The hour at last approaches when you must leave these mountains. But first you have a great work to perform; and here, you must solemnly promise to meet me two hours before to-morrow's midnight, by the Fairies' Oak

on the north side of Loch an Eilan. You know the spot?"

"I do," said Amherst, with a feeling of hesitation, which, though but faintly expressed, was quickly caught at by this mysterious being.

"You cannot fear me!" said she, with much emphasis, at the same time expanding her arms, and throwing back her head with an air of dignified surprise—

"I do not fear you," said Amherst, "but yet I may be excused for wishing to have some reason assigned for so extraordinary a demand, from one of whom I know so little."

"What!" said she, "do you doubt *me*, after having within this very hour saved your life!—after having saved you from cruel and remorseless murder?"

"It was you then," eagerly inquired Amherst, "it was you then who ——"

"Hush!" said the Carline interrupting him, and lifting her hand up in the attitude of silence—"I tell you we have no time to speak of such things now. Once for all, will you meet me at Loch an Eilan to-morrow night at the appointed trysting tree?—two hours before midnight? I

talk not of your life—what would your life be to me?—the fate of Eliza Malcolm hangs upon your promise."

"Eliza Malcolm!" exclaimed Amherst with astonishment. "Good Heavens! how can her fate be connected with any spot within the circle of these mountains?"

"Hush! speak not so loud," said the Carline. "But, answer me—Will you come?" She waited for his reply.

Amherst was moved by the powerful talisman of the name; and he thought the signal deliverance this friendly being had so lately effected for him, in a manner so miraculous in itself, a sufficient guarantee that at least she could intend him no treachery.

"I will come," said he.

"Then listen to me," said the Carline. "Come with your attendant, armed, and with your horses prepared for flight. Let not your real intentions be known at Lochandhu, but make some rational pretence for leaving it. Think of what you overheard pass to-night between those murderous villains in the hut. Nay, start not with surprise. Think you that I too heard them not?

They will be with your attendant by cock-crow to-morrow. Let him be prepared to mislead them, with the story of your expedition to Glenmore. Leave Lochandhu to-morrow afternoon, as if for the purpose of going thither. The robbers' road lies on the south side of the loch—let your way be on the north. Halt, and conceal yourselves and your horses among the thickets of the Ord Bain, till the trysting-hour, and then fail not to meet me under the appointed tree. Return now to Lochandhu—be cautious till your departure. Again, I tell you, that upon your prudence for the next twenty-four hours depends the fate of Eliza Malcolm !—If you fail—lost to your friends and to your country, your bones shall whiten beneath yonder silent wave, and your lonely spirit shall wander through these pathless wilds, or hover amidst the cold mists of the loch, without one kindred ghost to listen to its wailings. Remember !—two hours before to-morrow's midnight, at the trysting-oak !"

As she finished speaking, she raised her lean arms, as if to impress her words more deeply upon his mind, and instantly disappeared among the brushwood, leaving Amherst in amazement.

Having recovered himself, he hastened forward, and had gone but a very short way when he met with O'Gollochar, who had just set out to look for him, and was overjoyed to meet him.

Amherst did not exactly choose to trust O'Gollochar with all the particulars of his night's adventures, prudently considering, that what he might himself find rather a difficult matter to conceal from the penetration of Lochandhu and his wife, would be still more troublesome for Cornelius to keep. He therefore described the place where he was bewildered, and his route homewards as lying in a direction quite opposite to the truth. He was glad, however, that his good fortune, by having thus thrown O'Gollochar in his way, afforded him the opportunity of talking to him without the chance of being seen or overheard by others. He told him that it was his intention to go on his Glenmore expedition on the evening of the ensuing day, and as he meant to devote at least a week, partly to the pursuit of the deer, but chiefly to the wild scenery about the base of the mountains, on which he meant to employ his pencil, he should take his baggage with him.

He told his man further, that for certain reasons, which he should afterwards know, it was absolutely necessary that he should make no secret of their proposed expedition; that he should therefore take every opportunity of mentioning it that night, by way of a piece of news, in Lochandhu's kitchen; and that, if at any time he should be questioned on the subject, he should, without reserve, tell the whole of what his master had communicated to him about his plans of future recreation.

Matters having been thus settled, Amherst hastened to the house, from which he was by this time but a little way distant. The hour of his arrival was a very late one, yet he found that his host had only come in a few minutes before him. He endeavoured to meet Lochandhu with as much frankness of manner as he could possibly assume, though he felt that to do so was no easy task, and one that went very much against his conscience. He gave him a long history of his day's ramble; and, after mentioning the circumstance of his having seen the eagle, and the disappointment he had met with in regard to it, he told him that he had been led astray in the dark, and that he had

lost his way in the woods, but he took especial care to describe his wanderings, as he had done to O'Gollochar, in a manner very wide of the reality. Lochandhu listened to the story with his usual politeness, and to the account of his sport, with much apparent interest, and Amherst, to mislead him the more, talked, with feigned rapture, of the pleasure he had lately received from such amusements.

"You know," said he, "that much as I was gratified with the grand spectacle you were kind enough to indulge me with, when you contrived to show me so many head of deer, by having them driven into one spot, that I yet held the sport of that day to be a kind of butchery; and you may recollect that I then resolved to dedicate a week, before leaving the Highlands, to the pursuit of those noble animals, attended by no one but my servant, and entirely depending upon my own exertions and my own ingenuity. As time now wears away, and I cannot much longer intrude upon your hospitality, I have resolved to put my intentions in practice immediately, lest, by postponing them too long, and leaving them till the last, I may eventually be obliged to quit the country without

fulfilling them at all. I therefore mean to go to-morrow evening to the Bothy in Glenmore I am already acquainted with, whence I can easily reach such parts of the mountains as you have told me are frequented by the deer, and I anticipate much pleasure from being thus left to an entire dependance upon my own skill in waging war upon them. But this is not my only object. For I mean to revel in the sublime scenery to be met with about the base of the Cairngorum, and to endeavour to carry off with my pencil a few of the more remarkable features, already so powerfully impressed on my mind."

As this was nothing more than the following up of an intention Amherst had previously more than once expressed, Lochandhu manifested no surprise at his resolution. On the contrary, he applauded his design, and gave his guest a long list of general instructions, which might have formed a very good pocket manual, or vade-mecum on the sublime and arduous art of deer-stalking.

" I suppose, Mr Oakenwold," said he archly, after all this—" I suppose by the time a week has passed away, I may collect all the horses in the neighbourhood to bring home the spoil. At

all events, I shall send a messenger to you in a day or two, to learn how you get on.—But I advise you to take some provisions with you, just to set up your larder with at first, as I would by no means recommend that you should entirely trust to the execution of your gun ;—though, by the bye, you will find enough of the lesser kinds of game, to ensure such a marksman as you are against starvation."

After this conversation, Amherst retired to rest; and notwithstanding the harassing events to which he had been that night exposed, the fatigued state of both his body and mind was too great to permit him long to ruminate upon them ; and he slept very soundly till morning, when he arose well refreshed, and ready to undergo new adventures.

When O'Gollochar came to him, he gathered from him some interesting particulars. Having gone, as usual, at an early hour to the stable, he had had a visit from Forbes the miller. This cunning villain appeared to have assailed the Irishman with questions so round-about, yet apparently so simple and natural in themselves, that Amherst had good reason, secretly to congratulate

himself, on the precautions he had taken, in veiling his real intentions even from his servant, by giving him the same story, both as to his last night's adventures, and the proposed expedition he was about to undertake, that he had told Lochandhu; for he plainly saw, that if he had acted differently, not all the slender stock of art poor Cornelius was master of, would have been sufficient to throw dust in the eyes of this sly and subtile scout. As it was, every thing fell with perfect nature from the mouth of the unsuspecting Irishman; and Amherst was convinced that the villains would become the dupes of his manœuvre.

CHAPTER XIII.

While 'mid the pines that clothe yon rugged steep,
  Where browze secure the stag and timorous roe,
Which nearly circling, round thy margin sweep,
  And tint with darkest green the lake below,
Or, 'midst these birches light, I wander slow,
  Where droop their branches on thy crystal clear.

— — — — — —

Yon island castle, that in ruin hoar
  Frowns on the forest, thro' whose ruined glade
Winds yonder secret pathway, which, of yore,
  Marauding clans with frequent booty made;
These tow'ring rocks, that cast terrific shade,
  To me no images of danger show.

Bard of Braeriach.

In shipping such as this, the Irish Kerne,
  And untaught Indian, on the stream did glide,
Ere sharp-keel'd boats to stem the flood did learn,
  Or fin-like oars did spread from either side.

DRYDEN.

WHEN the hour fixed for his departure arrived, Amherst privately examined both his own and his servant's arms, and saw that his pistols were in proper order, and double charged. A

small basket of provisions was made up for him by Mrs Macgillivray; and the horses being brought to the door, he bid his host and hostess a farewell suitable to such an absence as they anticipated. Criminal as he believed, nay, knew Lochandhu to be, he could not help feeling a certain degree of kindness towards him, since the Highland laird's conduct in regard to him, had been uniformly that of a warm-hearted and hospitable gentleman. That Lochandhu should have retained so strong a recollection of the obligation he owed his father, the Admiral, was at least a proof that there were some fine threads in his strangely-woven and desperate character. Above all, his steady and uniform resistance of the attempts of his natural brother against him, excited certain warm sensations he could not subdue; and as he parted from him, he pressed his hand with a cordiality for which he afterwards almost blamed himself.

He rode off; and having soon forded the river, he travelled leisurely along its southern banks, by a route now well enough known to him. He then entered among the vast pine-forests, through a wild pass running between one of those beautiful green-topped isolated hills we formerly noticed,

and the lower elevations of the great mountain group.

Every step he advanced developed scenes such as Salvator might have copied, and which would have bid defiance to his wildest fit of imagination to have improved. Rocks reared themselves up amidst the gloomy features of the fir-forest, in every possible form savage nature could present. Nor were the softer beauties wanting; for the oak, and the birch, and the luxuriant underwood of gigantic juniper, and the large detached fragments of moss-covered stones lying scattered about, and the profusion of wild plants gracefully disposed around them, and the lovely knolls under which the track wound, imparted a thousand indescribable charms, to that which might have perhaps been of too sombre a character without them.

Immediately beyond the pass, the sun glittered on the surface of Loch an Eilan, seen through the huge upright stems of the fir trees, rising with a branchless bulk of timber, that might have supplied many a goodly mast and yard, and supporting the lofty, dense, and deep green canopy overhead. To the right of this lay a lonely lake, of about a mile and a half in circumference, every-

where surrounded by the endless forest of pine, rising tree above tree, on the sides of those lesser eminences forming its more immediate boundary, and covering them entirely, except only where the precipitous nature of the rocks bade defiance to their vegetation in certain spots, and there, breaking forth with their naked, grey, torrent-worn fronts, from amidst the wood, they gave an interesting variety to the scene. Behind these were hills of greater height, rising tier above tier, and the whole was closed in by the steep sides of those mountains, in the bosom of which this liquid mirror was enframed. From their immense magnitude and abrupt ascent, the whole visible sky appeared at first sight to be confined within a space of not much more than half a mile wide, where

——— "The champion head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied, and overhead upgrew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade
Of pine and fir.
A sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view."

But the delicate and softening mists of even-

ing, hanging between the various heights, relieved them from each other, and assisted in filling the mind with the magnitude and intricacy of the circumjacent solitude, and a knowledge of their real extent was gathered from observing that the giants of the forest were diminished to the eye by perspective, in proportion as they appeared climbing the different distances. Even upon the shaggy sides of the mountains, the pines were seen running up in long and scattered detachments, as if determined to take possession by assault, even of those bare summits towering far over every thing below, and which were still clad in the sober brown of their heathy covering. The skimming form of the eagle, seen dark amid the pure ether, and his shrill shriek, prolonged among the hollows of the mountains, were the only indications of animal life, except the light splash, and widening circle, now and then produced on the surface of the lake by the sportive trouts. These too were the only interruptions to the glassy stillness of the water, that reflected all above it, and even doubled the fair cup of the water-lily resting upon its bosom.

A few low hillocks, thinly covered with wide growing trees, divided this upper lake from that

below it, to which the mysterious dwarf had referred in her conversation with Amherst. Leaving the path that led between them, he turned off abruptly to the left towards the southern shore of Loch an Eilan.

This lake was considerably larger than the other, possessing, from similarity of situation, the same savage grandeur on its southern side, whilst its northern shores displayed a contrast of the most perfect beauty and softness. This arose from the lovely green-topped hill called the Ord Bain, the sides of which were chiefly covered with woods of oak and birch. Its projecting rocks also, being of limestone, presented masses of less rugged outline; and its slopes, where occasionally seen, exhibited a verdant turf running down in some places to the very water's edge.

Opposite to a smooth open lawny spot of this description, and but a short way from the shore, there was an island, described by tradition as being entirely artificial; and perhaps the circumstance of piles appearing among the stones, when the waters of the lake were reduced by extraordinary droughts in summer, afforded some reasonable grounds for such an idea.

The island, whether artificial or natural, was

so small, as to be entirely occupied with the shattered walls of an ancient fortalice, once a stronghold of the powerful family of the Cumins.

Such was the scene in which Amherst had now arrived. O'Gollochar was much surprised to see his master break off from the track, and dive abruptly into the shades of the Ord Bain. He followed him, however, without any remark. Having gained the thickest part of the woods upon its side, the young Englishman halted and dismounted, and bid his servant tie the horses to a tree.

Amherst then told the faithful fellow the true state of affairs, avoiding what might implicate Lochandhu, but saying enough of Alexander Macgillivray and his associates, to convince O'Gollochar of their villany, and to explain their plots against his life, and his present manœuvre to counteract them. He told him of the signal service rendered him by the Carline, as well as of the warning she had given him; and finally, he made him aware of the time and place of their proposed meeting.

O'Gollochar listened with perfect astonishment, and with occasional exclamations of horror, to his master's narrative. So carefully had every sus-

picious circumstance been concealed from him, that he had not had the slightest notion of the villanous treachery by which they had been so long surrounded at Lochandhu. What most of all surprised him was, that the Dwarfie Carline had proved so friendly. But notwithstanding all that Amherst had told him in her favour, O'Gollochar quaked at the very thought of the expected meeting. After making him examine their pistols—

"Cornelius," said he, "I know you to be a brave fellow, when all ideas of witches, fairies, devils, and ghosts, are banished from your mind. I beg, therefore, you will summon up your courage and your wits, for, from the caution the Carline gave me that we should both come well armed, I expect we shall have something more substantial to deal with to-night than spirits or aërial beings. But soft!—was not that something like the tramp of horses, as if issuing from the pass?—Let us climb this huge fir, that looks like the last remaining denizen of former forests, to discover whether the sound we hear proceeds from Macgillivray and the gang of robbers, and if it does so, we may judge then, with some degree

of certainty, whether or not they have really gone upon the fool's errand I intended to send them."

From the lofty and umbrageous top of this immense pine, they perceived the party of villains sweeping round the other side of the lake, at one moment hid by the trees, and by the intervening hillocks and bushes, and at another, seen marching in single file among the tall leafless stems of the firs. One or two were on foot;—but the greater number were mounted on ponies, and Alexander Macgillivray and the miller rode at their head. The night was now falling fast, and their figures were soon lost amid the gloom and intricacy of the forest.

Amherst came down from the tree highly satisfied with the success of his stratagem. He made O'Gollochar untie the horses, and lead them through the wood to a more open spot, where, though equally concealed, they could pick up a little grass. This being immediately above the place of meeting, and at no great distance from it, he had it in his power, by moving forward a few steps, to command a full view of the Fairy's Oak, an immense tree, growing singly from the smooth turf of a green point, directly opposite to the islet

occupied by the castle. There he determined to remain quiet until the appointed hour.

The night was cloudy, but the moon having risen, gave a steady though chastened light, sufficient, however, to enable the eye to distinguish any object that might show itself upon the short sward of the level ground below, dedicated, by popular superstition, to the tiny green-coated race of elves, who were supposed "to daunce the maze" round the great oak. The surface of the water between the islet and the land was visible, and the dark form of the ruined castle was distinctly seen rising from it.

It was not long after Amherst had taken up this new position, that stepping from under the trees to reconnoitre, he observed a light thrown upon one of the further walls of the castle, as if from a torch or lamp, carried by some person concealed by the buildings nearest to him. Having understood that it was a ruin, and uninhabited, he was a good deal astonished with this circumstance. The light however was transient. It seemed either to have been suddenly extinguished, or moved into a situation where it was hid;

and though he went frequently out to look for its return, he never saw it again.

After making frequent trips of observation from the shade, he at last called to O'Gollochar to come and look out. The Irishman did so, and much to the wonder of both, they beheld a small figure, sitting erect as it were, upon the water, and gliding with a slow steady motion towards the castle, as if from a part of the shore a little beyond the point immediately below them.

Amherst heard O'Gollochar's teeth chatter in his head as he stood beside him, and began to chide him for so soon giving way to his fears, at the same time earnestly reminding him of his promises.

"Faith, then, master," said the attached Irishman, "though I don't much like the looks of yon cratur sailing on the top of the water, for all the world like a salmon, I'll stand by your honour any way, now that I'm fairly in for it, though it should be against the divil himself—Och, I beg his pardon!—but be it against whom it may, by Saint Patrick, who I wish to be about us, may I never see old Ireland again, and more nor that, may I never see Mamsel Spindle any more, whose prayers,

I hope, I have at this moment, if I don't follow your honour till I drop."

"That's bravely spoken," said Amherst to him, very much amused to hear how naturally, like an ancient knight, he had recommended himself to his patron saint and his mistress in the same breath; "that's well said, Cornelius—let me see you act up to this manly resolution, and depend upon it, you will have no arms but those of flesh to contend with."

"Flesh or fish," said Cornelius, with a determined voice, "I'm ready for whatever may come!"

By this time, the object upon the lake had moved under the deep shadow thrown on the water by the broad mass of wall, and was entirely lost. Amherst and his man however kept their eyes stedfastly fixed upon the place where it had disappeared; and, after a little time, they again perceived it gliding from the obscurity under the walls, and making as it were towards that part of the shore where the Fairy Oak spread its wide arms abroad.—Amherst had now no doubt that the figure was that of the Carline. Renewing his caution to O'Gollochar, he desired him to follow,

and hastened to descend the slope towards the tree, beneath the shade of which they awaited her landing. As she drew near to the point of the shore, he perceived, and made O'Gollochar too observe, that although there was something very ingenious, there was nothing supernatural in her mode of navigating the lake; for she sat lightly balanced on a broad thin plank, quite unequal to support the weight of any larger body, but easily bearing her small frame, which was adroitly poised on it, and oared without noise, by means of two thin pieces of lathwood.

Her frail bark had no sooner touched the shore, than she leaped to the bank, and tripped with inconceivable rapidity into the shadow formed by the great oak.

"You are here," she said, in a low tone of voice. "'Tis well!—are your arms in order, and your horses at hand?"

"They are," replied Amherst.

"Then hasten to them," said she, "and, with this plaid folded, and stuffed with the softest and driest moss you can gather from the stones, quickly form a pillion, and fasten it securely behind your saddle;—I will be here again by the time

you have done it." And, saying so, she darted off to the water's edge.

Amherst and his servant lost no time in obeying her orders. O'Gollochar was actively useful, for his fears were now considerably moderated, by observing that this supposed witch at least worked by human means;—his wits, therefore, began to be perfectly available.

CHAPTER XIV.

I pray you tread softly, that the blind mole may not hear a foot fall.

SHAKESPEARE.

AMHERST and his servant had no sooner adjusted every thing about the horses than they returned to the tree. In a short time they perceived the Carline, again in the act of leaving the shade of the ruins, not on the same frail conveyance which had borne her thither, but in a little boat, which she rowed quietly towards the shore. Having attached it to the point where she had formerly landed, she again joined them.

"You must aboard with me!" said she; "every thing favours our design. But, remember! be resolute,—and be silent as the grave!—Let not surprise at any thing you may see or hear betray you into a single exclamation, or all may be lost. Forget not that you are but as instruments in my hands,—act but according to the signs I shall

give you, and success must crown our attempt.—Let us away, for we have not a moment to lose!" So saying, she motioned them towards the water's edge, leading the way to the boat, and they were no sooner seated in it, than she took the oars and rowed them towards the castle.

Passing under the ruins of a large mass, laid open by the dilapidation of great part of the outer wall, she made a sweep round the end of the islet, using the oars so gently that not the least sound was heard, and directing the boat towards the bulwark of stones there forming the artificial foundation. Here Amherst found himself under a lower building, having a narrow window that looked to the lake, from which a ray of light issued forth in one long thin stream.

Having again given them the signal caution of absolute silence, she sprang ashore, motioned to Amherst to follow her, and drew him towards the loop-hole, where, on looking in, he beheld—Miss Malcolm!

His agitation, at the sight of her he so loved, in such a place, had nearly overpowered him. In spite of all the injunctions he had received, he would infallibly have forgotten himself, had not

his conductress pulled him by the skirt, and holding up her finger to her mouth, whispered to him in hollow accents,—

"Her life depends upon your silence!"

The apartment in which the young Lady was confined,—for the massive door, fastened with strong bolts, sufficiently indicated that she was a prisoner,—was small and comfortless. A fire burned on the hearth, and she was seated opposite to it on the side of a pallet-bed of the most wretched description. She was wrapped up in her mantle and hood, and her dress altogether seemed to augur a preparation for travel. Her face was pale and grief-worn, and from her restless motions, and the frequent anxious looks she threw towards the door, she seemed to be in momentary expectation of some important event. Painful as it was to contemplate Miss Malcolm, under such circumstances, it was so long since his eyes had rested on her beloved image, that Amherst could have gazed for ever. But his active conductress warned him away, and he was compelled to submit.

She now led him round towards the ruins of the broken down mass of wall, under which they had

passed in the boat, where creeping, by her directions, upon his hands and knees among the fallen fragments of masonry, he obtained a view of a vaulted chamber, laid open at one end by the fall of part of the outer works. The fracture had been lately patched up with bits of the rubbish mingled with sods; and a doorway had been left in this rude barricado, which now stood open to permit the escape of the smoke, proceeding from a fire in the interior.

On drawing nearer to it, Amherst observed two men, who lay wrapped up in blankets on the straw near the fire, just within the opening; and in the darker part of the vault beyond, he could just discover five or six heads of sleepers. There were fire-arms, and other weapons of different kinds, disposed in various parts of the place; and a number of common utensils, such as are to be found in a Highland cottage, were scattered about.

The Dwarfie whispered, and pointed to him to hide behind one of the larger masses of the fallen ruins. His position was so near that he could see every thing within, and he was able to watch all her motions. He saw her creep like a cat towards the entrance, as if with the intention of stealing

in. She was already fully in the light; but she drew suddenly back again into the shadow. It appeared that the two men who were nearest the doorway were not yet asleep, for they began to converse, and one of them said to the other,

"Well, Antonio! since Davy tells us that there is no appearance of my consort on the coast yet, I see nothing for it but to send him back again, to try if he can bribe some trading captain to give you and the lady a passage."

"Pshaw!" said the other sulkily, "a *fico* for such advice!—Where should we find a fellow of that sort who would be trusty?—And then as to a land journey, the chances would be a thousand to one against me."—He raised himself on his elbow, that he might be better heard by his companion: "*Veramente ho gran voglio d'amazzarla.*—Were she dead she would be more easily carried. *Capite!*—And if it should turn out after all that we have taken the wrong woman, *che importa vi prego!*—A life or two more or less, you know, is but of little consequence in the scoring up of my account."

"That will never do, Antonio," said Brandywyn, for Amherst now perceived that it was

he; "you might be left in the lurch as to the reward,—but with the live bird in a cage, you may make your own terms."

"*Per Baccho adesso avete ragione,*" said the other. "There is some sense in what you say now; *forse sarebbe meglio restare un poco.* We may as well wait a little longer for the other vessel. Yet it is cursedly hard to be pent up in this *isola cattiva.* But should those rascals succeed in shooting *quel milordino* to-night, we shall have more freedom, and may return to the cottage where we had her before. *Maledetto!* What a deal of trouble he has cost us! We are at least secure, however, that he can as yet know nothing about her, and if he should, his knowledge is, perhaps, by this time, dead and buried with him. *Ma senta, amico!* Davy Stronach must return to-morrow, to see if he can hear of our ship. And now that all search is over, might we not move down to some of your lurking places nearer to the coast, so as to be ready to go on board immediately on her arrival, and so be off out of this infernal country?—*Dico bene?*"

"I think your plan is a good one," said Brandywyn. "But it will at least be prudent

to stay till we hear how Alexander Macgillivray has succeeded, before we venture to move."

After interchanging a few words more, of little importance, the two villains at last composed themselves to rest.

They had hardly begun to show symptoms of slumber, when the adventurous Carline drew herself towards the doorway, and although she still kept herself carefully within the shadow, she looked anxiously in upon the men, as if to ascertain the moment when they should be perfectly asleep. She was no sooner certain that they were so, than with a motion like that of the rattle-snake when it strikes its victim, almost too rapid for the eye to follow, she sprang within the threshold, and snatched something from under the coat, that served the Italian for a pillow, and instantly retreated into the dark. The ruffian was awakened by the twitch. He started up on his elbow, and exclaimed, "*Diavolo chi è!—cosa c'è?*" But looking around him, and seeing all quiet, he again composed himself to sleep with an execration.

After remaining still for a few minutes until he was again sound, the Carline gave Amherst a signal to follow her, and hastened to the spot

where the boat lay. She desired him to get on board, and again cautioning him to remember his promise of silence, she disappeared for an instant. The heavy sound of a withdrawn bolt was heard, through the little loop-hole, from the other side of the low building, and immediately afterwards the Carline appeared, followed by the Lady, wrapped up in her mantle.

In putting her foot into the boat, she had nearly slipped over the side, and Amherst's apprehension was so much excited, that forgetting all the Carline's injunctions in his anxiety for her safety, he sprang forward, and exclaiming, "My life! my Eliza!" he caught her in his arms.

The Carline, standing lightly balanced on the edge of the boat, assumed an authoritative air.

"Silence! or we are yet lost," said she in a deep, but decided tone; and leaping into the middle of it, she grasped the paddles with the utmost alacrity, and moved it forwards with the same silence and caution she had used in approaching the place. Having got about thirty yards off, she began to ply in a wide circle, round that part of the ruins, containing the vaulted chamber occupied by the villains.

The boat was already abreast of it, when Am-

herst observed a dark figure moving among the fallen fragments. He leant forward, and in a whisper, communicated the circumstance to the Carline. She had herself caught a glimpse of the figure, and had already begun to pull with greater force, and with inconceivable swiftness.

"Hilloah! who goes there?" exclaimed a rough voice from the islet.

But no answer was returned, and they were already mid-way between the castle and the land, when a confused clamour arose from the island. The exertions of the Carline were redoubled, and they reached the shore. There, as Amherst lifted Eliza from the boat, and hurried with her up the steep slope towards the spot where the horses were concealed, loud shouts, and half lost execrations came upon them, and flaming lights were seen appearing and disappearing among the ruins, and immediately afterwards, one or two distinct plunges in the lake convinced them that some of the men, on discovering the escape of their prisoner, and that the boat was gone, had taken the desperate resolution of swimming to the shore. To have dispatched them, while in the water, would have been an easy matter; but

their business was flight—not a moment was to be lost. Miss Malcolm was hastily lifted up behind Amherst, and the Carline, springing like a thing of air upon the neck of O'Gollochar's horse, commanded him to get into the saddle. For a moment he hesitated to obey her, but having seen the necessity of instant decision, he complied. She then called to Amherst to follow, and keep sight of her, and immediately darted off through the wood.

Amherst urged on after her at full speed. Before they had crossed the stream issuing from the end of the lake, the island seemed in a blaze, and the shouts of those behind them were heard echoing from the rocky side of the hill. Conducted by the Carline, they dashed on through brake and mire, and in a very little time, by crossing the river at a ford, they gained the great road leading to the low country.

There they permitted the horses to breathe for some moments. The Carline resigned to O'Gollochar the management of his, and seated herself on the baggage behind him, to which, indeed, she added but little weight. They then pursued their journey with a steady but less ra-

pid pace. It was, however, too quick for conversation.

As for O'Gollochar, notwithstanding all the good he had heard and seen of the Carline, he rode as if he carried the devil *en croupe*. Not a word escaped his lips; but ever and anon he looked round and surveyed the grim face of his companion, and shuddering with horror at its proximity, he withdrew his eyes, and admonishing the sides of Broadbottom with his heels, he endeavoured, since he could not fly from the spectre, at least to keep nearer to his master.

When they came to Mr Macphie's turf-house of entertainment, the horses would have willingly stopped at the stable-door; but notwithstanding the inviting lights that blazed from many a one-paned window of the sod mansion, shooting their rays from a variety of angles, they urged them on unseen, and unwilling to be observed. They left the pass, and the mountain lake behind them, and pushing over the moor, they never halted until they reached that large and romantic river already fully described. There the Carline sprang from behind O'Gollochar, and

leading Amherst's horse by the bridle, she conducted him down some steep, sloping, birch-covered banks, and brought them to a little holm, surrounded on three sides by a beautiful curve of the river, here running broad and deep.

This lovely spot, now under the most beautiful effect of moonlight, was sheltered on all sides by wooded banks. Its tender pasture was most grateful to poor Brisk and his companion, who by this time scarcely required a tether.

Under a steep tufted with trees, and natural shrubbery, in a nook most perfectly concealed, the Carline showed them a place of shelter beneath the projecting granite rock. Having withdrawn the charge from one of the pistols, they easily produced a light, by snapping it under some dry brushwood, and a fire was soon kindled. The provisions which had been put up for Amherst at Lochandhu were now produced, and even the delicate Miss Malcolm did not disdain to do considerable justice to them. A couch of dry moss was prepared for her, and Amherst immediately proposed to leave the place, that she might indulge in a short repose. But this she declined; for, although she was considerably fa-

tigued, her mind was too much agitated to permit her to sleep.

Amherst entreated her to satisfy his anxious curiosity as to her captivity, and she readily complied with his request. But the reader being already acquainted with the manner in which the Lady was carried off, we shall take up her story at that part where the troop of horsemen were last seen, when they swept past Cleaver on the Downs near Sanderson Mains.

Their plans being completely frustrated by the unlooked-for attack on the Charming Sally, and seeing the certainty of her capture, the leaders galloped straight to the retreat in Moatmallard, then only tenanted by the old man, Davy Stronach, who, though he had a cottage in the neighbourhood, and kept up the appearance of being a *creel*, or rude basketmaker, was, in reality, their storekeeper, and was generally to be found at his post in their vault after dark. Reflecting that the very reasons which had induced them to fly thither, would probably lead others to search for them there, they determined to make every thing secure, by leaving the place immediately, and carrying their captive into the Highlands, where Brandywyn knew

that they were sure of protection and assistance from Lochandhu's gang.

Having reached their neighbourhood, Brandywyn found out Alexander Macgillivray, by whose advice they crossed the Spey, and carried Miss Malcolm to a lonely house, situated far up among the wilds of the forest, near the foot of the Cairngorum. This house was tenanted by one of the gang, and to the wife of this man was the care of the prisoner confided, whilst Antonio and Brandywyn occupied one of the outhouses, and the rest of the party found quarters in the vicinity. There they resolved to wait, until they should receive intelligence of the arrival of the vessel they expected.

Whilst Miss Malcolm remained at this cottage, she was permitted to take exercise, by walking in the neighbourhood. But resolute as her mind naturally was, every hope of escape was cut off, owing to the circumstance of her being invariably attended and watched by the woman.

It so happened, that Amherst, in one of his shooting expeditions, had accidentally passed very near the place of Miss Malcolm's confinement; and this having been discovered by Antonio, he took the precaution of removing her to the

fortalice in the islet, where she had remained for several days.

On the night immediately previous to that of her escape, Eliza was lying on her pallet-bed, ruminating on her sorrows. It was past midnight, and all was silent around her, save the dull sound of the wave, as it lapped against the stones of the bulwark, or the prolonged and melancholy notes of the owl, that, perched upon a broken part of the ruins, replied to the echoes of its own hootings. The reflected moon-beam found its way through the loop-hole, and fell faintly upon the pavement of her cell. Her eyes were vacantly fixed upon it, in the listless dream of hopeless sadness. On a sudden the miserable apartment was obscured, by the approach of some object from without, and, turning her eyes towards the aperture, to ascertain the cause, she, to her great terror, beheld a dwarfish figure, in the act of squeezing itself through the opening, though it appeared to be hardly more than sufficient to admit a cat. She remembered the apparition of the chapel, and she screamed with affright. But it fortunately happened that her guards were at too great a distance at the time to hear her shrieks.

In an instant the Carline stood upon the floor by her bed-side, and seizing her arm with a powerful gripe, she said, in a deep and hollow voice, that chilled her heart, and overpowered even the violent effects of her alarm,

"Utter not another sound, or you are lost for ever!—I come to save you!"—Then, all at once assuming a tender tone,—"Eliza, fear me not. This haggard, forbidding-aspect, bodes any thing but evil to you. When you were yet a child, this ghastly visage terrified your infant heart, and you fled from my embrace. Ah! little did you know of whom you were afraid. But I forgave you; and, conscious of my own deformity, I vanished from your sight, that I might not shock your young eyes with this hideous form in which God has been pleased to imprison my soul. Nor have I ever dared again to cross your path. But I am your guardian angel;—and now the dreadful fate that hangs over you compels me to appear, and imperiously demands that you should dismiss the fears of childhood. Summon up your resolution then, and bear to look and listen to one who comes to deliver you from this dungeon, and to whom,

though you are ignorant of it, you are already indebted for life itself."

Her last expressions were uttered with a remarkable earnestness of manner—the voice gradually mellowing, and even faltering as it approached the conclusion of the sentence,—and Eliza felt the warm tear-drops falling upon the arm which the mysterious being still retained.

"My child!—my child!" said she, in a voice almost stifled with the strength of her emotions,—"my beloved child! what torments have I endured from the cruel necessity of separating myself from you!—What are the scoffs and taunts of the wicked and the unfeeling, compared to the bitter thought of being for ever deprived of the smiles of one, who ought to be eternal sunshine to me!—But," added she with more composure, as if endeavouring to command herself, —"the hours pass.—This is not a time to indulge in dreams which ought to have been long ago forgotten, but which now come upon my soul like the beams of the first dawn upon the cold damp shadows of the wide chaos. It behooves me now to ply the active work of your deliverance. Long have I searched before I discovered the place of

your confinement,—and now I come but to prepare you for flight, for as yet the means are to be sought. To-morrow night I see you again. To-morrow night I come with him you love, to snatch you from those perils which here surround you. Nay, start not!—Amherst Oakenwold will be here! Be prepared for a midnight journey. Let not, in the meanwhile, your hopes betray themselves to the ruffians who guard you. Above all, arm yourself with prudence, to ensure your leaving your prison in silence; and let not the sight of Amherst Oakenwold overpower your reason so far as to render all my precautions and endeavours unavailing. Eliza!—my Eliza, I must call you!—farewell for to-night!"

She paused—the partial light showed the strong workings of her emotions;—she bent her head upon the hand she held, and uttering, in a smothered voice, but with inconceivable tenderness, "God, in his infinite mercy, support and protect you, my beloved child!" she escaped—Eliza hardly knew how—so overpowered was she with astonishment, and with the various thoughts, and feelings, which crowded rapidly upon her in consequence of this strange interview.

Having thus explained the manner of Miss Malcolm's preparation for her deliverance, we shall leave the reader to conceive what passed in her mind, until the second visit of the Carline, of which we have already given the particulars.

CHAPTER XV.

——————— I did hear
The galloping of horse. Who was't came by?
SHAKESPEARE.

I go, I go, look how I go;
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.
SHAKESPEARE.

MISS MALCOLM's narrative was hardly concluded, when the Dwarfie suddenly appeared.—"Away! away!—to horse!—your pursuers are near!" said she, hastily—and, snatching a hand of each, she hurried them off among the thick underwood, growing at the base of the rocks at one end of the meadow. There she desired them to remain quiet until she should return, and instantly left them.

It now required all Amherst's exertions to support Miss Malcolm in this new and trying alarm. He seated her on the soft moss, under the thick and drooping boughs of a large holly-tree, and

stood by her with a pistol in each hand, ready to defend her to the last extremity.

The trampling of horses' feet was now heard, as if coming down the horse-path, by which they had reached the hollow amphitheatre, and which was the only practicable descent into it.—Men's voices talking loud were also distinguishable, though as yet too distant for the words to be made out. The night was at its darkest hour, and the moon long since set.

A loud halloo was distinctly raised, as if by the person in advance, for the purpose of guiding him that followed. At length, the dialogue of the speakers could be caught.

"This way, Antonio!—I have got to the flat meadow at last. Here we must rest for a while. All chance of the chace is lost for this bout."

"Hah, *maledetto!—furie d'inferno!* what a cursed finale to all our exertions!" exclaimed the other, in a tone betraying the utmost rage and disappointment.—"*Corpo del diavolo!*—it was all your fault—did I not tell you that it would have been better to make sure of her?—*Accidente!*—To lose so much time, and labour, and

travel, by listening to such a chicken-hearted *animalaccio!*"

"By Heaven! Antonio, you give your tongue too much licence.—Like a brute as you are, you have forgotten all that I have done for you in this matter—you would fain shift off that blame upon me which belongs to your own carelessness!"

"*Siete buggiardo!*" retorted Antonio, with bitterness.—"She might have been dead and safely packed in a box by this time, had it not been for you."

"Liar!" exclaimed Brandywyn, "by Heavens you shall pay for that word—draw, rascal, and defend your life."

"Hold, you fool, I meant no harm," said the other, more coolly; "but see what fire is that smouldering yonder amongst the bushes! Let's tie our horses to this tree, and examine the spot."

Both the men were overheard advancing as fast as the darkness of the night would permit towards the overhanging rock, within twenty paces of which Amherst and Miss Malcolm were concealed.

"*Per Dio!*" exclaimed the Italian, "some one has been here!"

"Aye, and lately too," said the other.

"*Corpo di Padre!*" cried Antonio, "there's a handkerchief—let me see it nearer the light—E. M:—By heavens, it is her's—she cannot be far off——*Dannazion dell anima mia!—presto! presto!—bisogna cercare!*—Let's try every bush. —Hah!—if we had her but again—by heaven and hell, I would make sure of her."

The two ruffians now began a most active search, smashing the bushes, and poking their swords everywhere around them. From the noise he made, Antonio seemed to be forcing his way through the underwood, in the direction of the very spot where Eliza was concealed. A deadly fear came over her. Amherst cocked his pistols, and stood resolved within himself to blow out the brains of the Italian, as soon as he should be sufficiently close to ensure his destruction. Enough of light came at intervals from the expiring faggots under the rock, to make his form visible, as he advanced in an irregular track through the opposing branches. He came nearer and nearer, trying the copse from right to left, as if resolved that no part

of it should escape him. The fatal tubes were more than once lifted to their object; and Antonio's death would have been sealed, had not Amherst felt reluctance to shed even a villain's blood, in a manner in itself so revolting to a generous mind. But he still came on—two or three random steps brought him to one side of the holly. He struck the branches with his sword. A faint scream burst involuntarily from the lady. It was hardly audible amidst the crashing noise made by Antonio; yet was it sufficient to arrest his attention. He stopped to listen. He was now in shadow, and a thick bough, rising from the ground, so hid his person, as to prevent the possibility of Amherst firing at him with any hope of success, from the spot where he stood. He, therefore, prepared to move forward a single step, to obtain a better aim, when another and amore distinct scream arose a few yards from the place of their concealment.

"Hah—*corpo del diavolo!*—She is there!" cried Antonio, darting into the obscurity of the thicket. "She is here!—She is here!—*qui camerata!—camerata!—qui!—qui!*"

The crashing amidst the bushes increased both

before and behind Amherst, who, in his fears that Miss Malcolm might have moved from her place of concealment, became bewildered. Brandywyn came rushing past within a few feet of where he stood, carrying blazing brands of fir.

"This way! this way!" cried Antonio; "this corner of the thicket is not wide, and she must be between us and the rocks. She cannot escape us.—Fire the copse!"

No sooner had Brandywyn passed, than Amherst moved under the bush, and put down his hand to ascertain whether Miss Malcolm had actually quitted it as he feared. His wrist was grasped by the Carline, and, to his infinite joy, he received from her iron fingers the soft hand of Eliza. They silently raised her, and their mysterious conductor led them up a narrow winding path, assisting Miss Malcolm from time to time, in the more difficult parts, with a power of arm almost supernatural.

In an instant the dry copse was in a blaze, illuminating the shaggy steeps around.

"*Furie d'inferno!* there are figures escaping yonder!" cried Antonio.

"Where?—where?" exclaimed his companion.

"*Di là, di là!—presto! presto!—Dannazione!*"

"This way!—here is a path!"

"*Accidente!—Maledetto!*"

"Hell and furies!"

The Carline redoubled her exertions, and dragged Eliza up the steep with both hands. Emerging from the brushwood, and reaching the open glade, they found O'Gollochar already on horseback. As they mounted in breathless haste, the shouts of the ruffians pressed hard upon them. The Carline again leaped on before O'Gollochar, darted off, and bade Amherst follow. Led by their wizard guide, they flew up the remainder of the grassy and partially wooded banks, and, as they fled, the flames, and the black clouds of smoke, bearing myriads of burning fragments on their murky bosom, came rolling up from below.

Their way along the precipitous banks of the river, dangerous at all times, was now rendered fearfully so, by the darkness, and by the desperate fury of the Carline's flight. Fortunately for Miss Malcolm, she knew not always where she was riding. But Amherst, though he felt not for himself, was too anxious about the precious

burden he carried not to tremble as he rode. More than once, the blundering of the jaded animal demanded all his horsemanship to prevent the certain destruction of both. And many and frequent were the cautions he gave his fair charge to embrace him more firmly. Her hands were unconsciously twined over his heart. Amidst all his anxiety he felt their pressure, and it beat as if it would have leaped from its prison.

As to O'Gollochar, he rode with very different feelings. The Carline urged on Broadbottom with a speed to which, active as he was by nature, he had never before been put, and at which he was very much astonished to find himself moving. The way was so narrow in many of the more perilous places, that a greyhound could hardly have passed them, yet the rapidity of the Carline's flight was never relaxed. At one moment, O'Gollochar's eyes glanced in horror downwards into the black pools at a frightful depth below, but transiently discovered by the fire that flashed from the flinty rocks at every stroke of the horses' heels. At another, his ears were deafened by the mighty roar of the rapids, chafing among the huge blocks of granite, and appearing white

amidst the darkness of the night. His guide, seated on the neck of the horse, seemed, like some demon of the elements, to give a more than natural energy to the animal. His former superstitious notions regarding her returned with fourfold strength upon him. He clung mechanically to the saddle with knees and hands, in a cold perspiration, until he became persuaded that he was actually riding post to the devil. He lost all other recollection indeed, and shutting his eyes, he might soon have been convinced that he was actually flying through the air, had not his visage been occasionally subjected to some rude shocks, and scrapings, from the projecting boughs, under which the lesser figure of his companion had passed without damage.

In this way they rode, fortunately without accident, until, as the grey morning began to appear, they passed by the thicket where the grotto lay—forded the smaller river at the very place where Amherst had crossed it before, and climbed those wooded banks rising over its bed.

On the breezy brow of the hill overlooking the beautiful scenery of the double valley, so fully described on a former occasion, the Dwarfie halt-

ed. It was not, however, until the poor quadrupeds required it that she thus gave them a temporary repose. Notwithstanding the ablution they had just undergone in stemming the rough stream of the ford, their flanks were covered with a lather, and their chests and necks with foam,—their sides heaved, and their nostrils yawned wide at every inspiration, as if to draw in a whole atmosphere of air. For some minutes after they had stopped, O'Gollochar continued to adhere to the back of his horse,—and, like a landsman after a voyage, still felt the motion of his hurricane passage. He was soon, however, brought to his senses, for Broadbottom, after shaking himself till he made the stirrups ring again, yet without displacing his master, began to kneel down to take the luxurious refreshment of a roll on the grass, in which amusement he was immediately joined by Brisk. Lucky was it for the poor Irishman, that he happened to open his eyes, just as his charger was laying himself leisurely on one side on the green sod;—for the very first tumble would have so squeezed him, that, in the language of the old romances, "he might have had little need of a leech." As it

was, he had just time to scramble off upon all-fours, ere the armed heels of both the steeds were glittering in the air,—crack went the girths, and off came both the saddles. This was an unlooked-for misfortune that required to be immediately remedied, and O'Gollochar was quickly shaken from his dream to repair the damage. Meanwhile Eliza, much fatigued, was assisted under the shade of a weeping birch, where, seated on the grass, and resting with her back against its rugged bark, she partook of some fragments of food, prudently hoarded up by the Irishman from the feast of the preceding night.

The dawn was as yet little advanced, and objects in the valley were hidden by one of those dense morning exhalations, often filling the hollow troughs in a country where rivers have their courses. O'Gollochar had nearly succeeded in righting the damage occasioned by the untimely frolics of the horses, and was almost ready to fit the saddles again to their backs, when the distant plunge, and splash of water, followed by the clattering sound of hooves, came from the misty void beneath. The noise rose fast upon them, and spread alarm through the group.

All were instantly in motion; and even Miss Malcolm, fatigued as she was, became reanimated by renewed terrors. The utmost expedition was used to get the horse-furniture adjusted; but even their very hurry contributed to baffle them. The sound became stronger, and approached nearer—and men's voices were heard—and Amherst began to prepare his arms for resolute defence.

"Rash young man!" said the Carline, "think not of conflict where you have so much at stake! —retire by that path winding amongst those birches,—there you will be concealed until you have gained a few moments to fit yourself for flight,—then make for the track over the hill, and spare neither spur nor lash till you have reached the level country. You bear a treasure your life must answer for. Leave me to deal with these wretches.—But hold!—you must ride without your hat and mantle, young Lady, for these are necessary for my purpose."—So saying, she snatched both the one and the other from Miss Malcolm.

"Tarry not for me," she continued in a rapid manner, as she waved her hand towards the

thicket, and parted from them.—" Here we part!—I have done my work !—and now we part for——— !"—Then pausing suddenly, and looking back to Miss Malcolm with an expression of tenderness, of which her ghastly features could hardly have been supposed capable,—she flew towards her, and embracing her knees, she burst into a flood of tears, and sobbed out in half articulate words—" Oh—say not—say not that it must be for ever !"

She seemed to wait anxiously for the reply, as if her life depended upon the word.—Eliza was so agitated by the approaching perils, that she had hardly breath to utter,

" No !—my preserver—I must see and thank you again and again !"

But it was enough—" Thanks ! Thanks !—a thousand thanks !" said the Carline, in a smothered voice, as she burst away from them, and rending up a tall stem of broom, with the withered spray attached to it, she tied the mantle dexterously over it, and putting the hat upon the top, she shrouded herself beneath, and elevating it at the same time, so as to give to her figure something of the height and external appearance of that of Miss Malcolm, she waved them away.

Loud shrieks and yells arose behind them. Forgetful of the fatigue their horses had undergone, they spurred them furiously on again to their full speed. The ground continued to rise, though more gently, and they soon broke from the birch-woods upon the bleak heath. Without halting, they could now look behind them, and, much to their surprise, they perceived two horsemen, whose figures seemed to be like those of Antonio and Brandywyn, galloping across the moor at about a quarter of a mile's distance in their rear, towards an opposite point of the compass, in chace of the apparition of Miss Malcolm, which had suddenly started up before them. The swift Camilla herself never "scoured the plain," nor "flew o'er th' unbending corn," nor "skimmed along the main," with greater speed than did this phantom. Amherst staid not, however, to view the chace, but still urging forwards over the long side of the moor, he, with twisted neck and stretched eye-balls, looked anxiously back for the event. The shouts came feebly from afar. The sun was now fully above the horizon, and sparkled along the dewy surface of the ground. At the dis-

tance they were now seen from, the horsemen appeared like the mimic puppets of a theatre. He saw that the bellies of their steeds grazed the heather-tops from the speed they were stretching at. Now they seemed almost to have overtaken the object of their pursuit, and again the Carline, doubling like a hare, threw them a number of yards out.

At length, after she had excited their eagerness and rage till they became blinded by their fury, she suddenly directed her course towards a vast extent of black and treacherous bog, over which she bounded from tuft to tuft, with all the agility of the wonderful Lady of antiquity, to whom we have just compared her. Hoodwinked by the keenness of their pursuit, the ruffians desperately followed, when, down went their horses, and the riders, in succession, performing somersets in the air, were projected at least twenty feet forward, by their previous impetus, souse into a large peat-hole; and the Carline, uttering wild shouts of laughter, crossed the broad bog in the direction of the valley, and was soon lost amidst the thick covert of its banks.

CHAPTER XVI.

———They sat recline
On the soft downy bank, damasked with flowers.
MILTON.

———every power above,
Heaven, Earth, Thyself, bear witness to my love!
MONTGOMERY.

Cease, man of woman born! to hope relief
From daily trouble and continued grief.
PRIOR.

AFTER long and hard riding, Miss Malcolm's weariness became so insupportable, that she besought Amherst to halt for a short time. A little brook stole silently along a bank enamelled with flowers, and a grove of tall ash-trees, here and there interspersed with magnificent bushes of holly, furnished at once sufficient shade and retirement.

O'Gollochar having taken the bridles out of the horses' mouths, lay down by them to watch that they might not stray, whilst his master and Miss Malcolm seated themselves at no great dis-

tance in the shade, close to the margin of the rill.

"Eliza!" said Amherst, after regarding her for some moments with a look of excessive tenderness, "Eliza! If yet I dare call you by so dear a name, what have we suffered since our cruel fate last parted us? What, at least, have I not suffered?"

Miss Malcolm, pale with the excessive fatigue she had undergone, became yet more like alabaster, as Amherst thus abruptly recalled all her griefs.

"Oh, talk not of our last meeting, Mr Oakenwold," said she, with painful energy. "After what has passed between us, it would be vain to attempt concealing with you, that I too have suffered! Oh! bear witness, Heaven, how much wretchedness of heart I have endured, since the sad events of that day, that terrible day, which severed us, as I then thought, for ever!"

"Oh! 'twas impossible," cried Amherst, catching at her last words with a burst of enthusiastic feeling—"'Twas impossible that fate could for ever separate two hearts thus throbbing for each other! No. Heaven itself has interfered to reunite us, and never, never shall we part again!"

Miss Malcolm looked earnestly in his face for some moments, and then bursting into tears—

"Ah! no, no, no!" said she; "flatter me not with these dreams of bliss—they are not for me. My resolution has hitherto been kept up by the immediate perils which pressed upon me, almost to the exclusion of all other thoughts. But now that I am again awakened to the full recollection of days of former joy, and to the cruel extinction of all my fondest hopes, despair, deep and lasting despair, is all that can ever be mine!"

"Oh! talk not thus, Eliza!" exclaimed Amherst, in a tone of the utmost distraction. "Do not thus torture one whom you do not deny you love. Have you not once already made me the happiest of human beings by the tender acknowledgment? And will you now sacrifice my happiness, nay, my very existence, to some goblin of the imagination? No, no, you cannot—I read it in your eyes, those lovely, those unpractised eyes, which know not what it is to deceive—tell me, eloquently tell me, how much, how purely I am beloved."

Miss Malcolm sighed deeply, and after great agitation, which it required some moments to compose—

"Amherst," said she, in a half choked voice, "'tis cruel to press me on a subject in which I am so defenceless. My tongue has ever been accustomed to utter my inmost sentiments, when they are called for; and should it be silent, my eyes would indeed speak them honestly forth in undisguised language. I cannot, therefore, were it even my wish, I cannot deceive you. I do, indeed, love you. The affection with which you have inspired me is not to be worn away like the thin film of gold, that gives a borrowed and temporary lustre to some baser metal. No, it is so pure and enduring, that the delicate vessel itself must be destroyed before it can perish. But why should you urge me thus,—since,—since you already know I never can be yours—nay, since you already know that mysterious circumstances hang over me, which have doomed us to part,—to part for ever!"

This declaration, to utter which had manifestly required the exertion of all her remaining strength of mind, was too much for her; and hiding her face with her hands, she burst into an agony of tears.

"Hold!—Hold, Eliza, I implore you!" exclaimed her impassioned lover, in an almost fran-

tic tone, "drive me not to madness by the repetition of Lord Eaglesholme's dreadful sentence,—a sentence pronounced under the influence of some inexplicable delusion, but to which it is impossible he can adhere. Time, at least, must remove those imaginary obstacles to our union, arising like phantoms before his mind, to pervert his better judgment. Our age, our inclinations, our sentiments—all combine to proclaim us born for each other. As an individual, he does not object to me, nay, he has honoured me with a more than ordinary portion of his approbation. He knows my prospects as to fortune too; and he is well acquainted with the irreproachable honour and antiquity of our family, and ——"

"Aye, there!" exclaimed Miss Malcolm, interrupting him with a start, and involuntarily seizing his hand,—"there is the obstacle!—your ancient house!—the hitherto uncontaminated purity of your blood!—your father's pride!—merciful powers!—But where am I wandering?" added she, after a pause, during which she slowly relinquished the hold she had taken of him.—"Would to Heaven we had never met!—yet to say so is more than I can endure!—But had I never known you—or had I sooner known myself—I

might have been still the simple and the happy, as I am now the wretched, though innocent Eliza!"

"Good Heavens! Miss Malcolm, then you are acquainted with the nature of your uncle's objections to our union? I entreat you relieve my racking curiosity. I cannot longer exist under the agonizing mystery in which I have been left ever since that unhappy day when I bade adieu to Eaglesholme Castle. In pity remove it, that I may know the full magnitude of the difficulties I have to surmount;—for, trust me, they must be no trifling difficulties which I will not speedily overcome!"

"Alas! Amherst," said Miss Malcolm, in a tone of deep despair,—"they are not within the reach of your control,—yet you must know them. I do not usually lack resolution. But though my brightest hopes are dead, I feel I could not bear to tread over the grave in which they have been laid for ever. I have not strength,—I have not self-command enough—now to unfold the dreadful secret. Ask me not then to tell you now. Though Heaven itself seems to have thus willed our meeting, I even now feel a certain self-disapprobation, for thus indulging in converse with one whom I have been compelled to renounce for ever."

"Compelled to renounce!" repeated Amherst, with a keenness and fire he had not hitherto exhibited, excited perhaps by the recollection of some of Lord Eagleholme's expressions at the time of their separation. "Who has dared to use compulsion with Miss Malcolm?" Then perceiving that the violence of his action had in some measure agitated Eliza, he proceeded, in a milder tone:—"Surely Lord Eaglesholme—the noble—the generous—the gentle—the affectionate Lord Eaglesholme, has not been so cruel as to resort to means so brutal! And if he has," added he after a pause, "surely Miss Malcolm cannot believe that duty would require a submission to measures so arbitrary. Heaven seems, as you say, to have again thrown us together, Eliza; and it has done so for the beneficent purpose of bringing about the consummation of our happiness, in despite of all unjust opposition. Oh let me persuade you to yield to its dictates, and to aid the wisdom of its plans. Let us fly together to England,—and there, under my father's roof!——"

"Hold!" interrupted Miss Malcolm, in a firm and decided manner, "I cannot permit you, Mr Oakenwold, to remain a moment under the erro-

neous impressions you have so hastily taken up. Lord Eaglesholme used no restraint with me. The only compulsion I alluded to, was that voluntary restriction imposed upon us by a sense of duty, teaching us to avoid what is in itself wrong. But had it been otherwise, and had Lord Eaglesholme acted as you have supposed, you mistake me much, if you imagine that I could be induced to disobey the will of him who has been the guardian of my youth, or to forsake one who has cherished me with the fondness of a parent, from my tenderest years, and to whom all my duty, as well as my affection, of right belongs."

These words fell with calmness, as well as determination, from Miss Malcolm, and stilled all feelings of irritation in the bosom of her lover.

"Oh, forgive me, Eliza!" cried he, seizing her hand with extreme fervour,—"forgive the hasty burst I was betrayed into by a sudden passion, combining, with the misery of my fate, to deprive me of reason. I was, indeed, very wrong—deeply to blame. But say you forgive me; and do not blast me with the first look of unkindness you ever threw upon me!"

"I meant not to be unkind," said Eliza, softened by the earnestness of his appeal. "Heaven

knows, unkindness would ill become me towards one to whom I have more than once owed my life—from whom my heart has taken impressions which nothing but death can eradicate. But," continued she, sighing deeply, " time wears,—and our conversation, I fear, draws on without being of any real advantage to either of us. I again repeat, that I dare not now attempt an explanation of what I find is to you still a mystery. But I solemnly promise to inform you by letter, of that which I cannot now bring my tongue to utter in words. Let this content you for the present; and let me entreat that you will prosecute the small remainder of our journey, without again introducing a subject which can only agitate and distress us both."

To this request Amherst was compelled, though unwillingly, to submit, without a murmur.

The remainder of their journey was without adventure. The lovers vainly tried to keep up a conversation on indifferent subjects. As they entered the wild grounds of Eaglesholme, all attempts at dialogue ceased; and each of them dropped into a fit of musing, holding, as it were, mental converse with the other, in language more

intensely interesting than any they had dared to employ when addressing one another in words. Amherst was aware that the gate of the Castle must soon divide them. Hope forbade him to think for ever; but yet he could not tell for how long. And though the horses were hardly able to crawl, he checked poor Brisk more than once, and rated him for going so fast. As for Miss Malcolm, when they began to draw near the Castle walls, she trembled so, that Amherst sensibly felt the agitation of her frame.

O'Gollochar rode forward with alacrity to ring the great bell, nothing doubting but that it was to be the peal of joy to every one, both without and within, and to no one more than to himself and the light-hearted Mademoiselle Epingle. His master and Miss Malcolm reached the gate just as the old Swiss had opened it. Amherst dismounted tardily from his horse, and he had no sooner done so, than Miss Malcolm fainted into his arms. In an agony of apprehension, Amherst bore her hastily into the porter's lodge. The failure of nature was but for a moment;—she recovered,—opened her eyes, and looked wildly up—then starting from the chair in which her lover had placed her, she waved her hand

with frantic action, and before Amherst could even attempt to detain her, she rushed through the entrance into the inner court-yard, and disappeared. With his hands over his eyes, Amherst, overwhelmed by the pressure of his feelings, found his way almost instinctively out of the great gate, then throwing himself wildly upon his horse, he galloped off with a speed, of which the poor animal could hardly have been supposed capable.

O'Gollochar stood for some moments petrified. He had been indulging by the way in delightful dreams of anticipation. He had been figuring to himself the surprise and the joy of the lively Mademoiselle Epingle at his unlooked-for return; and had been revelling in expectation of the hilarious evening he should spend, after all his hardships and dangers. So intensely occupied had he been in these happy visions, that he had had no time to examine the barometer of his master's face. It is no wonder, then, that he was thunderstruck when the cup of bliss was thus suddenly dashed from his lips, just as he thought he was on the eve of tasting it.

"Och ullulloo!" cried he, with a prolonged howl, that made the massive battlements resound

again. "For the love of St Patrick, now, Mr Switcher, can ye be after telling me the maning of all this?——Och, master dear! won't you wait a bit, an it were only to see how the poor sowl gets into the house?—Och, sure he's bewitched after all!—So much for going a-hunting with the divil's dam houlding the bridle!—By the Powers, and the Seven Churches, he's off!—Mamsell Spindle! Och! if some good angel now would but just whirl her here for one moment!—Holloah! master dear!—Sure one of Brisk's shoes is off.—Troth and I believe they are all off, horse and all, in rale arnest; and faith, now, and so must yours, Maister Braidbottom, and be sorrow to it!"——

He fairly burst out a-blubbering, and lifting himself like a sack upon the weary back of his horse, he followed Amherst at a jog-trot, every shake forcing out a sob from the very bottom of his heart.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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